CIVIL WAR EPILOGUE

MARVEL
543

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Fantastic Four

DIRECT EDITION

RATED A

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A team--and a family--of adventurers, explorers and imaginauts, the Fantastic Four lead lives both ordinary--and extraordinary!

Join us as we celebrate 45 years of...

Fantastic Four

When a Superhuman Registration Act was proposed which would require all people possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government, Mr. Fantastic sided with the new law and became a leading force in the pro-registration movement. His stance caused a sharp divide within the Fantastic Four, with the Invisible Woman and the Human Torch leaving to join the anti-registration resistance movement and the Thing choosing to remain neutral and relocate to France.

Now, the war over the Registration Act is over, and the Fantastic Four have reunited...

...or have they?

"C'MON, SUZIE, DON'T LEAVE US HANGIN' "

Dwayne McDuffie – Writer
Mike McKone – Penciler
Andy Lanning & Cam Smith – Inkers
Paul Mounts – Colorist
VC's Rus Wooton – Letterer

"IF THIS BE...ANNIVERSARY!"

Stan Lee – Writer
Nick Dragotta – Penciler
Mike Allred – Inker
Laura Allred – Colorist
VC's Rus Wooton – Letterer

"A DAY AT THE RACES"

Paul Pope – Story and Art
Jose Villarrubia – Color Art
VC's Rus Wooton – Letterer

Molly Lazer & Aubrey Sitterson – Assistant Editors
Tom Brevoort – Editor
Joe Quesada – Editor in Chief
Dan Buckley – Publisher

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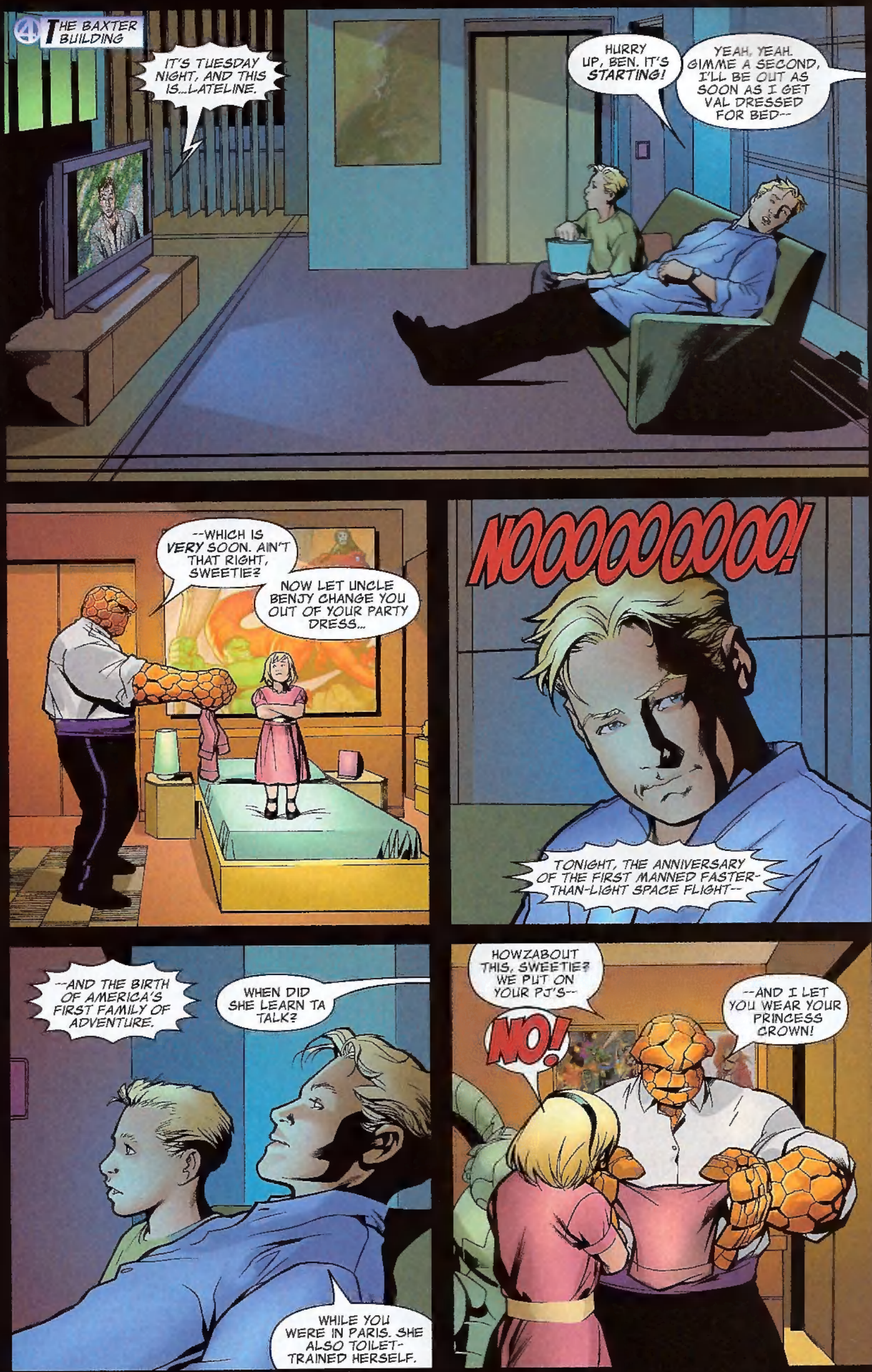
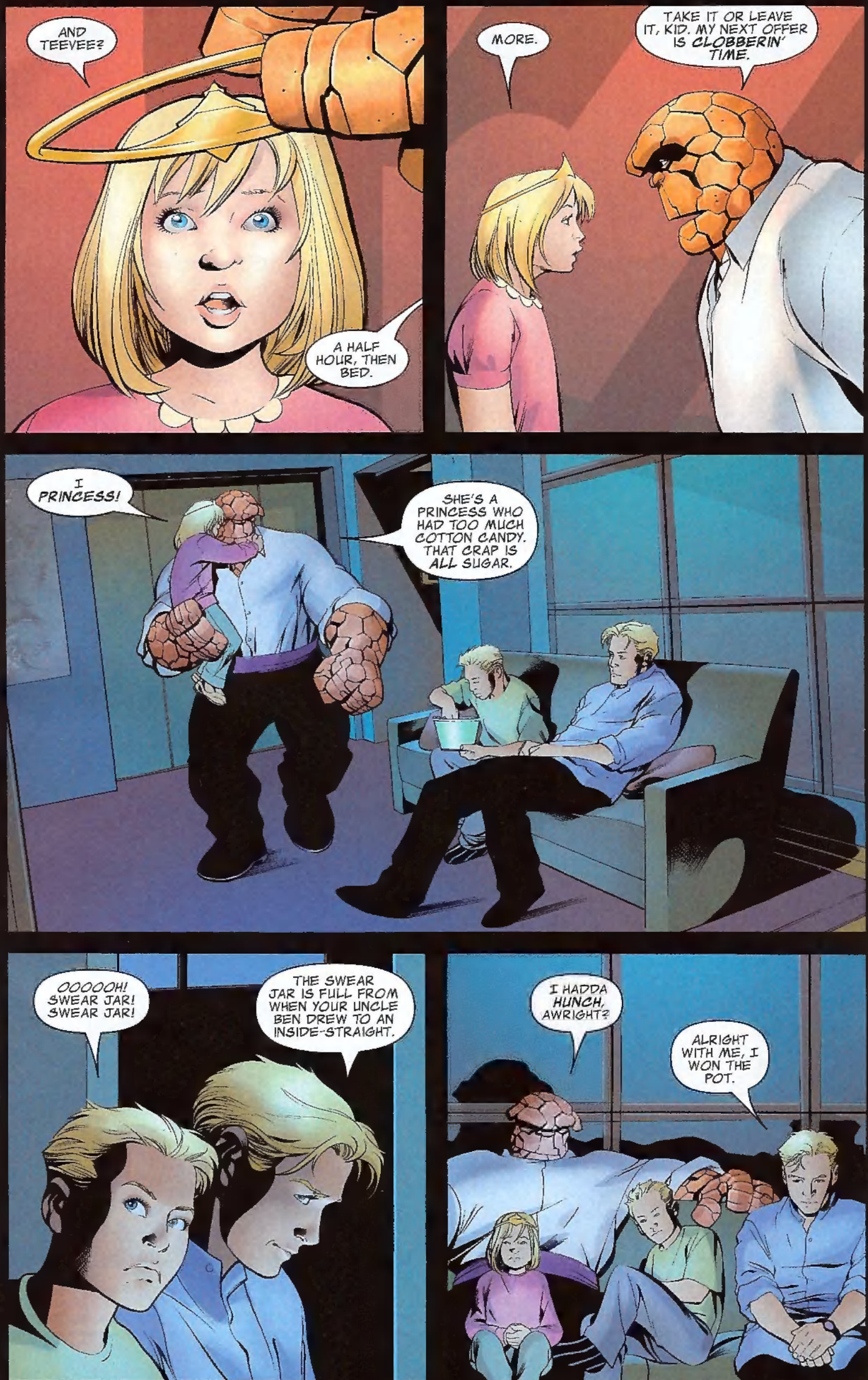
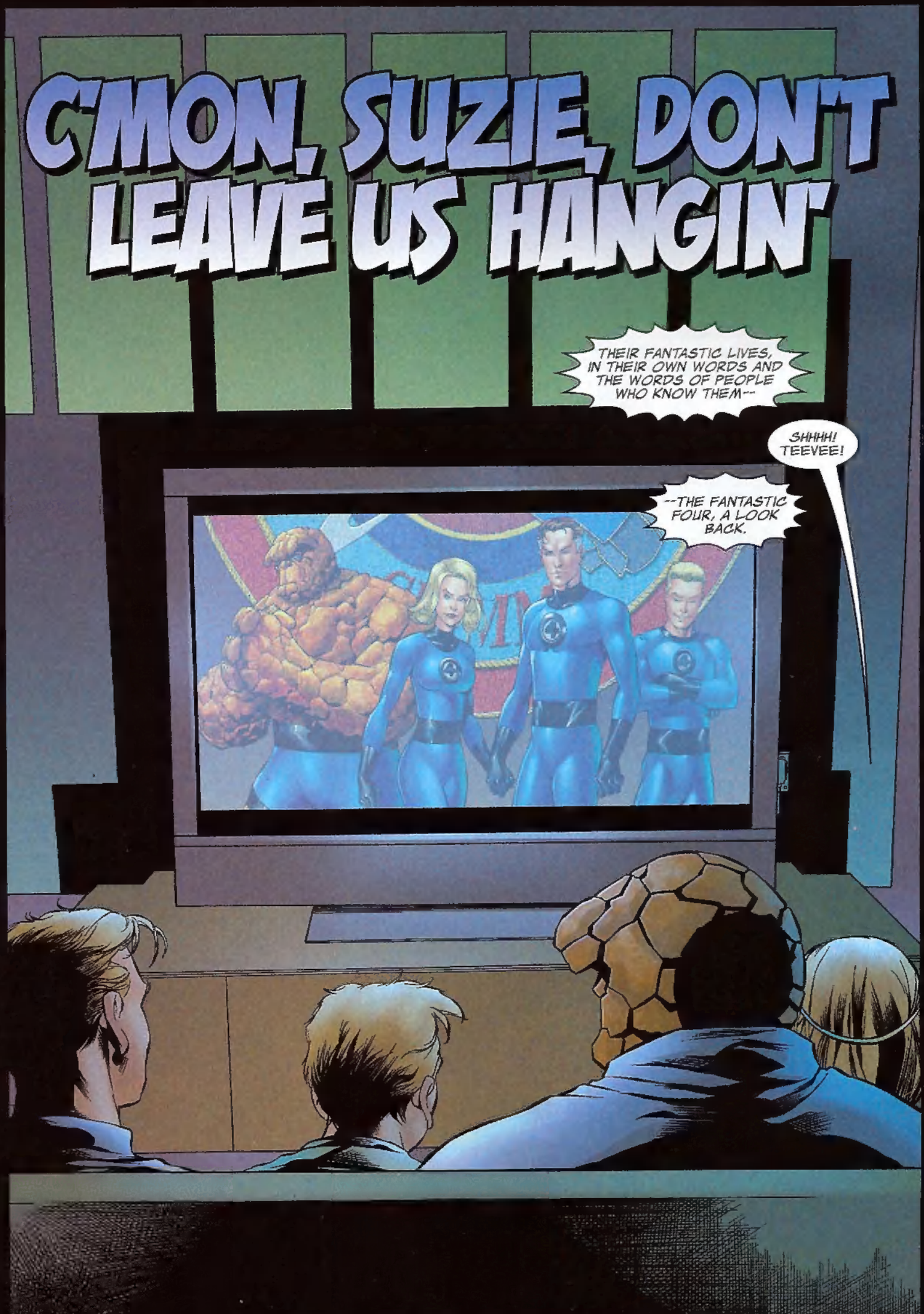

THE BAXTER BUILDING
IT'S TUESDAY NIGHT, AND THIS IS...LATELINE.
HURRY UP, BEN. IT'S STARTING!
YEAH, YEAH. GIMME A SECOND, I'LL BE OUT AS SOON AS I GET VAL DRESSED FOR BED--
--WHICH IS VERY SOON. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, SWEETIE?
NOW LET UNCLE BENJY CHANGE YOU OUT OF YOUR PARTY DRESS...
NOOOOOOOOO!
TONIGHT, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST MANNED FASTER-THAN-LIGHT SPACE FLIGHT--
--AND THE BIRTH OF AMERICA'S FIRST FAMILY OF ADVENTURE.
WHEN DID SHE LEARN TA TALK?
WHILE YOU WERE IN PARIS. SHE ALSO TOILET-TRAINED HERSELF.
HOWZABOUT THIS, SWEETIE? WE PUT ON YOUR PJ'S--
NO!
--AND I LET YOU WEAR YOUR PRINCESS CROWN!

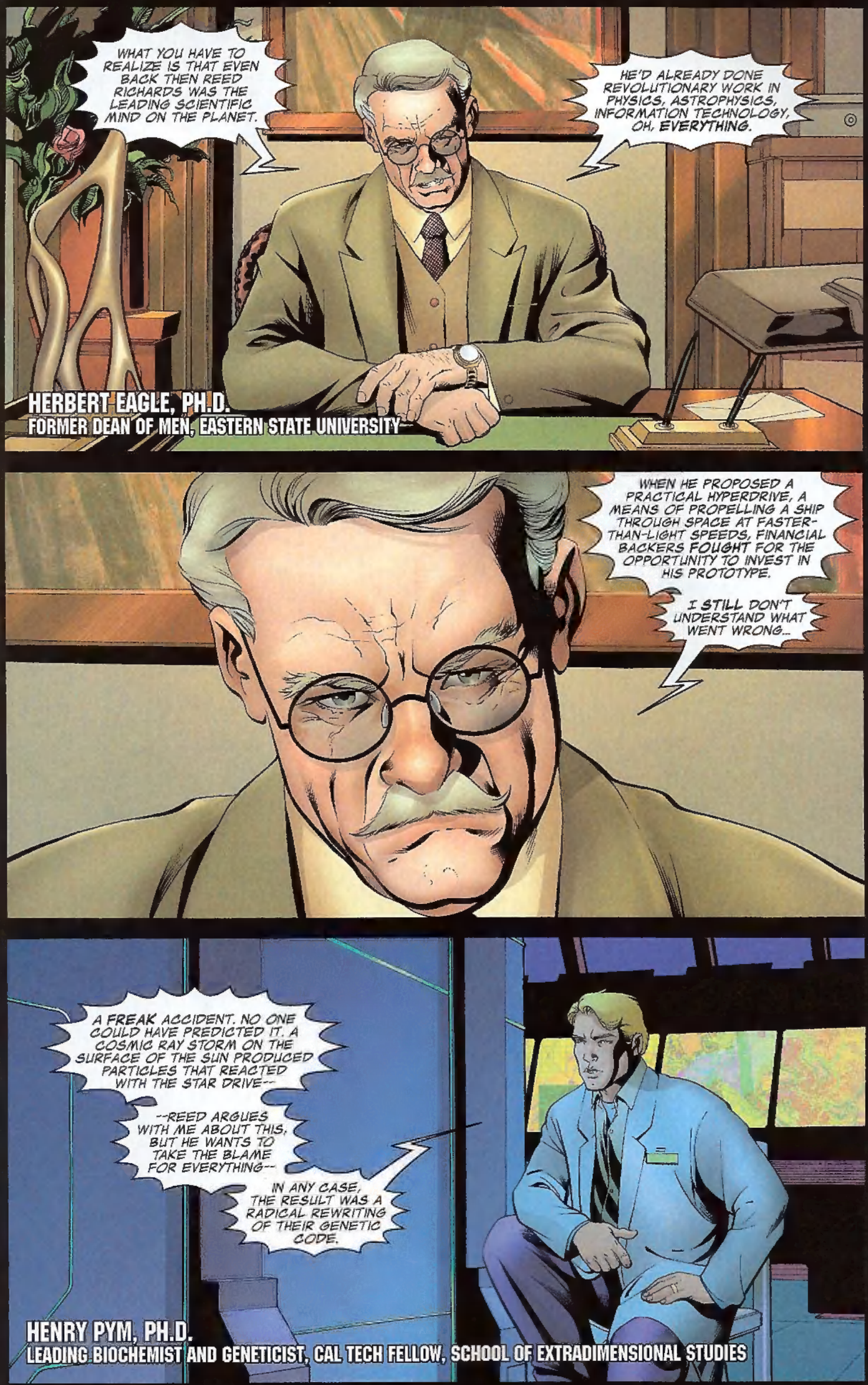

AND TEEVEE?
A HALF HOUR, THEN BED.
MORE.
TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT, KID. MY NEXT OFFER IS CLOBBERIN' TIME.
I PRINCESS!
SHE'S A PRINCESS WHO HAD TOO MUCH COTTON CANDY. THAT CRAP IS ALL SUGAR.
OOOOOH! SWEAR JAR! SWEAR JAR!
THE SWEAR JAR IS FULL FROM WHEN YOUR UNCLE BEN DREW TO AN INSIDE-STRAIGHT.
I HADDA HUNCH, AWRIGHT?
ALRIGHT WITH ME, I WON THE POT.

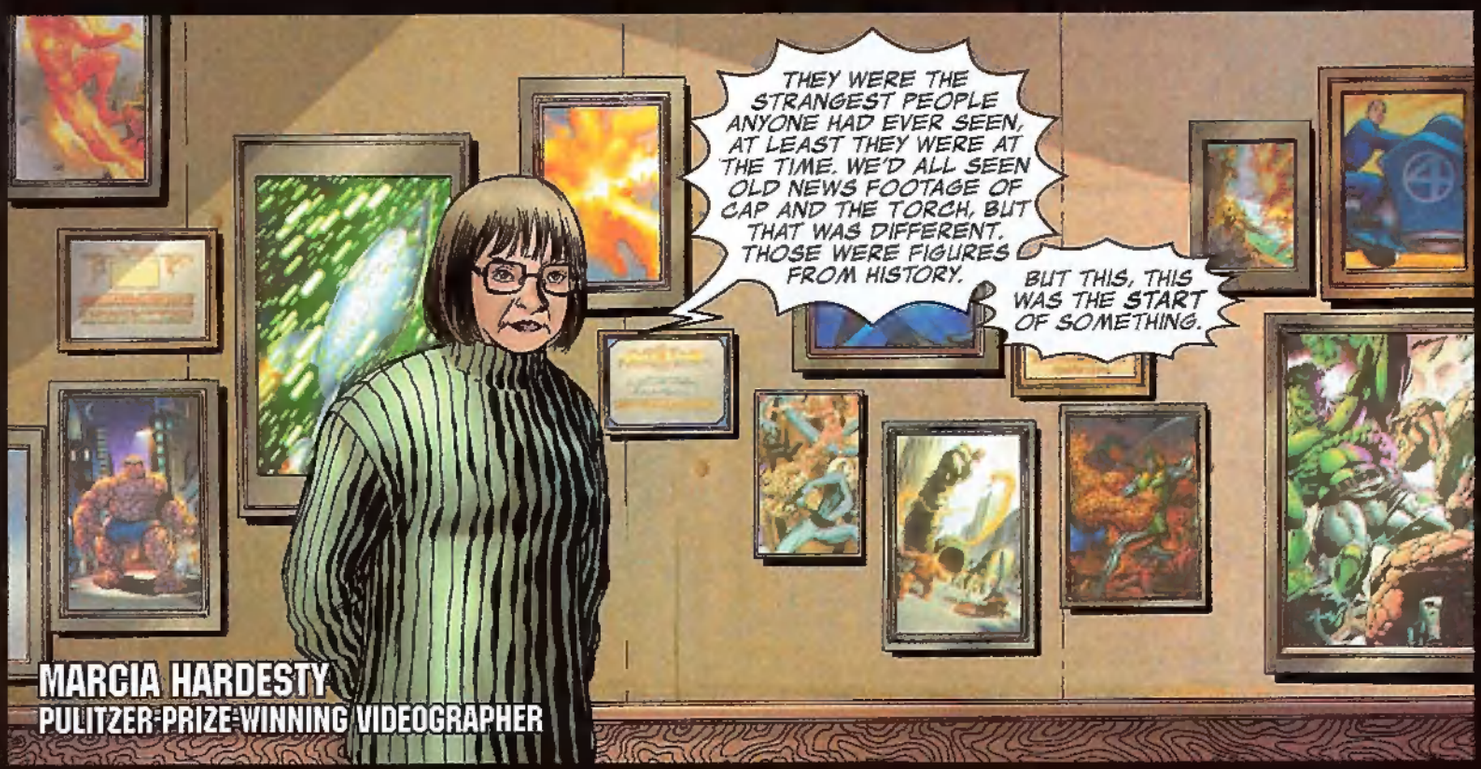

C'MON, SUZIE, DON'T LEAVE US HANGIN'
THEIR FANTASTIC LIVES, IN THEIR OWN WORDS AND THE WORDS OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEM--
SHHHH! TEEVEE!
--THE FANTASTIC FOUR, A LOOK BACK.

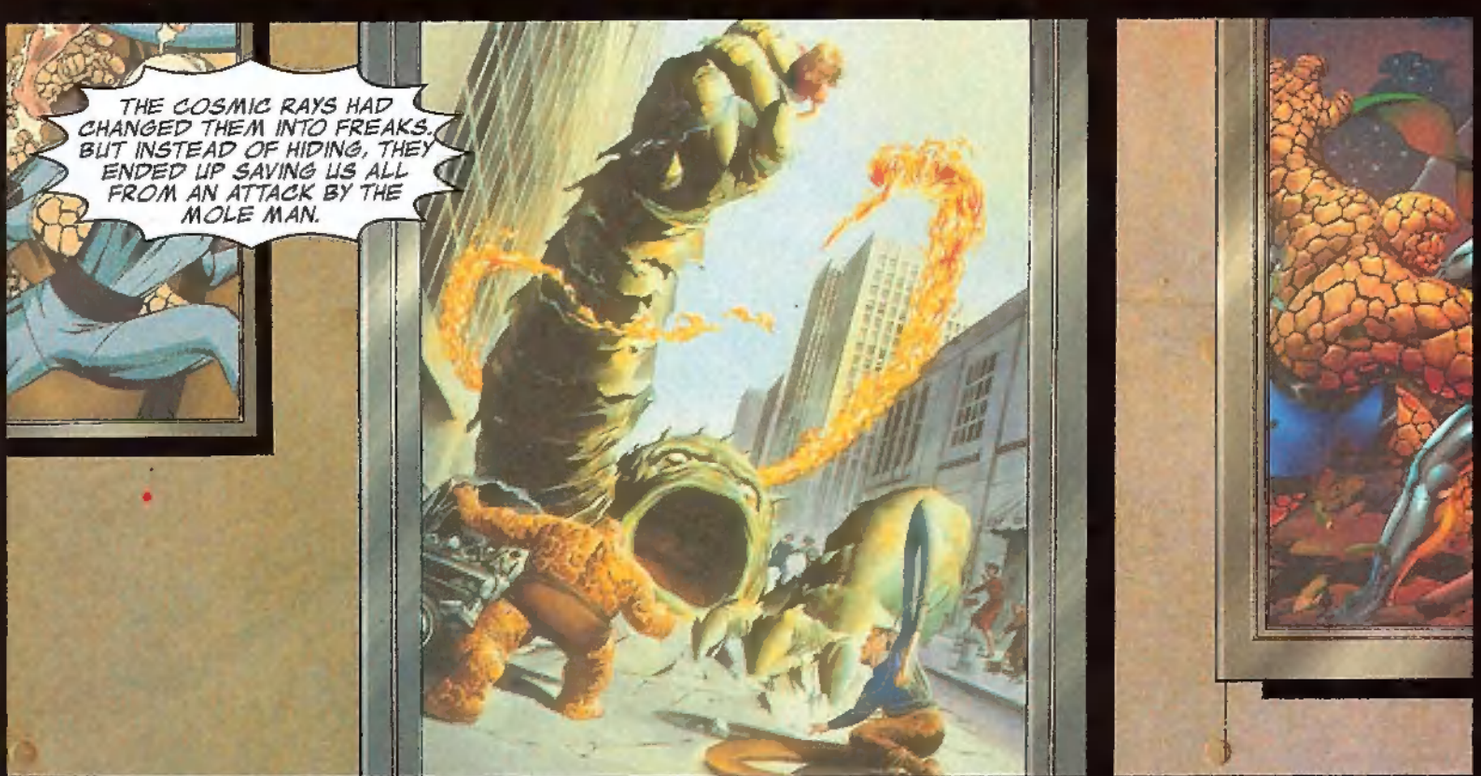
DWAYNE McDUFFIE WRITER | MIKE McKONE PENCILER | ANDY LANNING & CAM SMITH INKERS | PAUL MOUNTS COLORIST | VC'S RUS WOOTON LETTERER | MOLLY LAZER & AUBREY SITTERSON ASSISTANT EDITORS | TOM BREVOORT EDITOR | JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF | DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

PRESENT A MIGHTY MARVEL MILESTONE, THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

YEAH, I WAS ON DUTY THAT NIGHT. THE FUNNY THING IS THAT I SAW THEM BREAKING IN.
PROFESSOR RICHARDS USED TO SNEAK IN AND WORK ON HIS STARSHIP ALL THE TIME. I THOUGHT IT WAS A LITTLE WEIRD THAT HE BROUGHT OTHER PEOPLE WITH HIM, BUT YOU KNOW, SUPER-GENIUS AND ALL.
JAMES KREIG,
FORMER SECURITY GUARD
I WAS AS SURPRISED AS ANYONE WHEN HE STOLE THE FREAKIN' SHIP.
I GOT CANNED, YOU KNOW. MY CLEARANCE WAS REVOKED. I NEVER WORKED IN THE SECURITY FIELD AGAIN.
SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE
YEAH. GOOD TIMES.
ZIPMART

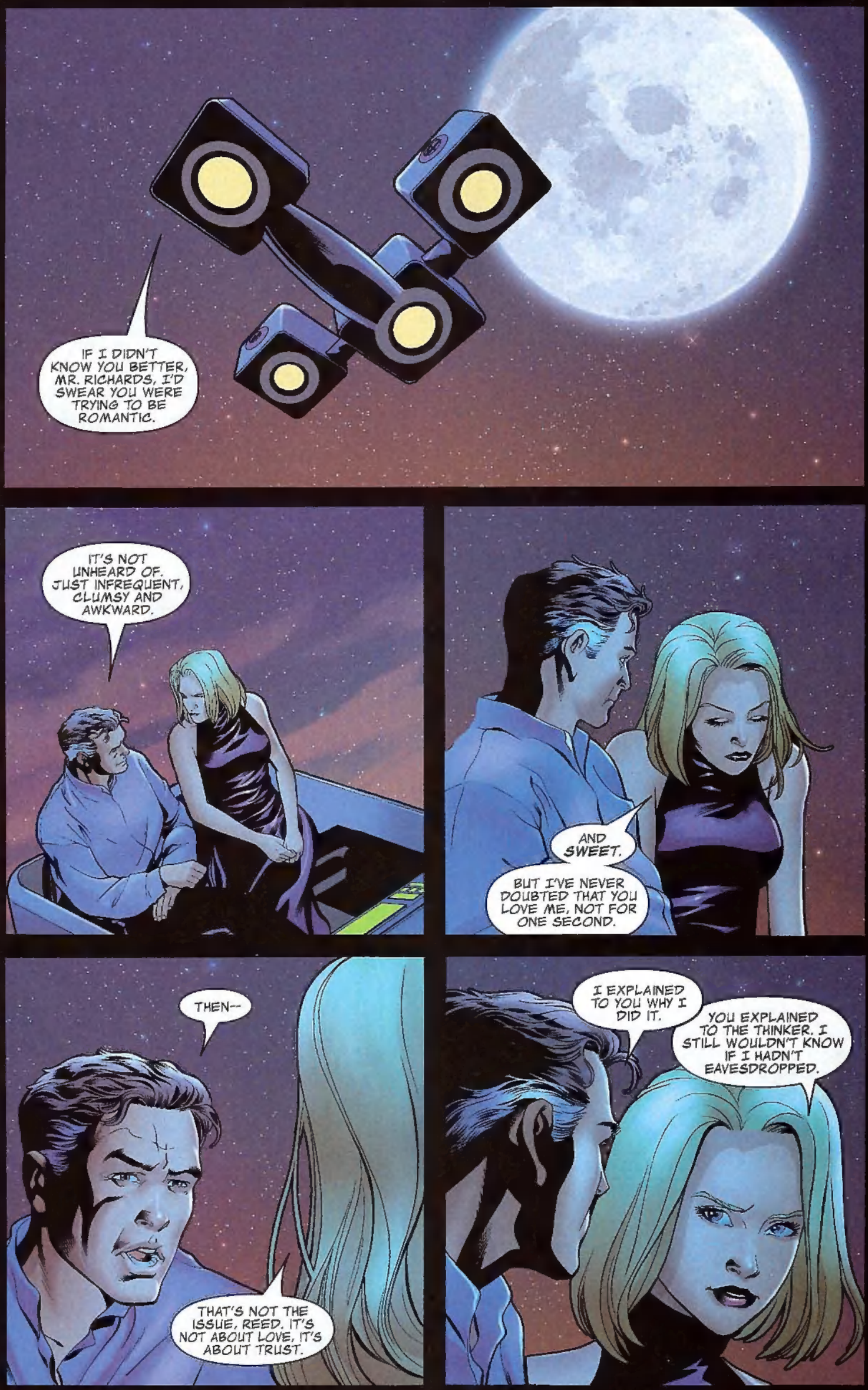

WHAT YOU HAVE TO REALIZE IS THAT EVEN BACK THEN REED RICHARDS WAS THE LEADING SCIENTIFIC MIND ON THE PLANET.
HE'D ALREADY DONE REVOLUTIONARY WORK IN PHYSICS, ASTROPHYSICS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, OH, EVERYTHING.
HERBERT EAGLE, PH.D.
FORMER DEAN OF MEN, EASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
WHEN HE PROPOSED A PRACTICAL HYPERDRIVE, A MEANS OF PROPELLING A SHIP THROUGH SPACE AT FASTER-THAN-LIGHT SPEEDS, FINANCIAL BACKERS FOUGHT FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN HIS PROTOTYPE.
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WENT WRONG...
A FREAK ACCIDENT. NO ONE COULD HAVE PREDICTED IT. A COSMIC RAY STORM ON THE SURFACE OF THE SUN PRODUCED PARTICLES THAT REACTED WITH THE STAR DRIVE--
--REED ARGUES WITH ME ABOUT THIS, BUT HE WANTS TO TAKE THE BLAME FOR EVERYTHING--
IN ANY CASE, THE RESULT WAS A RADICAL REWRITING OF THEIR GENETIC CODE.
HENRY PYM, PH.D.
LEADING BIOCHEMIST AND GENETICIST, CAL TECH FELLOW, SCHOOL OF EXTRADIMENSIONAL STUDIES

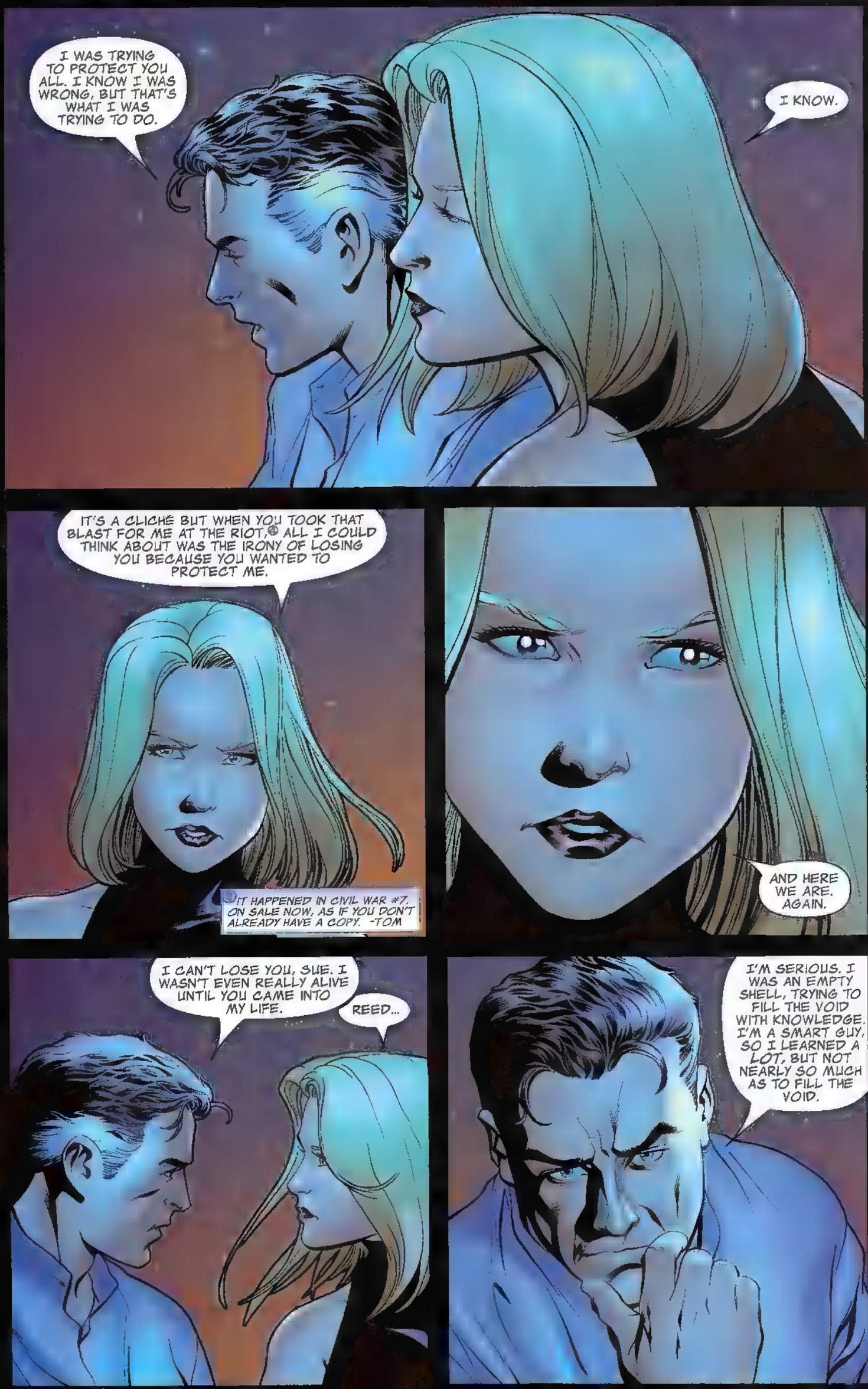

THEY WERE THE STRANGEST PEOPLE ANYONE HAD EVER SEEN, AT LEAST THEY WERE AT THE TIME. WE'D ALL SEEN OLD NEWS FOOTAGE OF CAP AND THE TORCH, BUT THAT WAS DIFFERENT. THOSE WERE FIGURES FROM HISTORY.
BUT THIS, THIS WAS THE START OF SOMETHING.
MARCIA HARDESTY
PULITZER-PRIZE-WINNING VIDEOGRAPHER

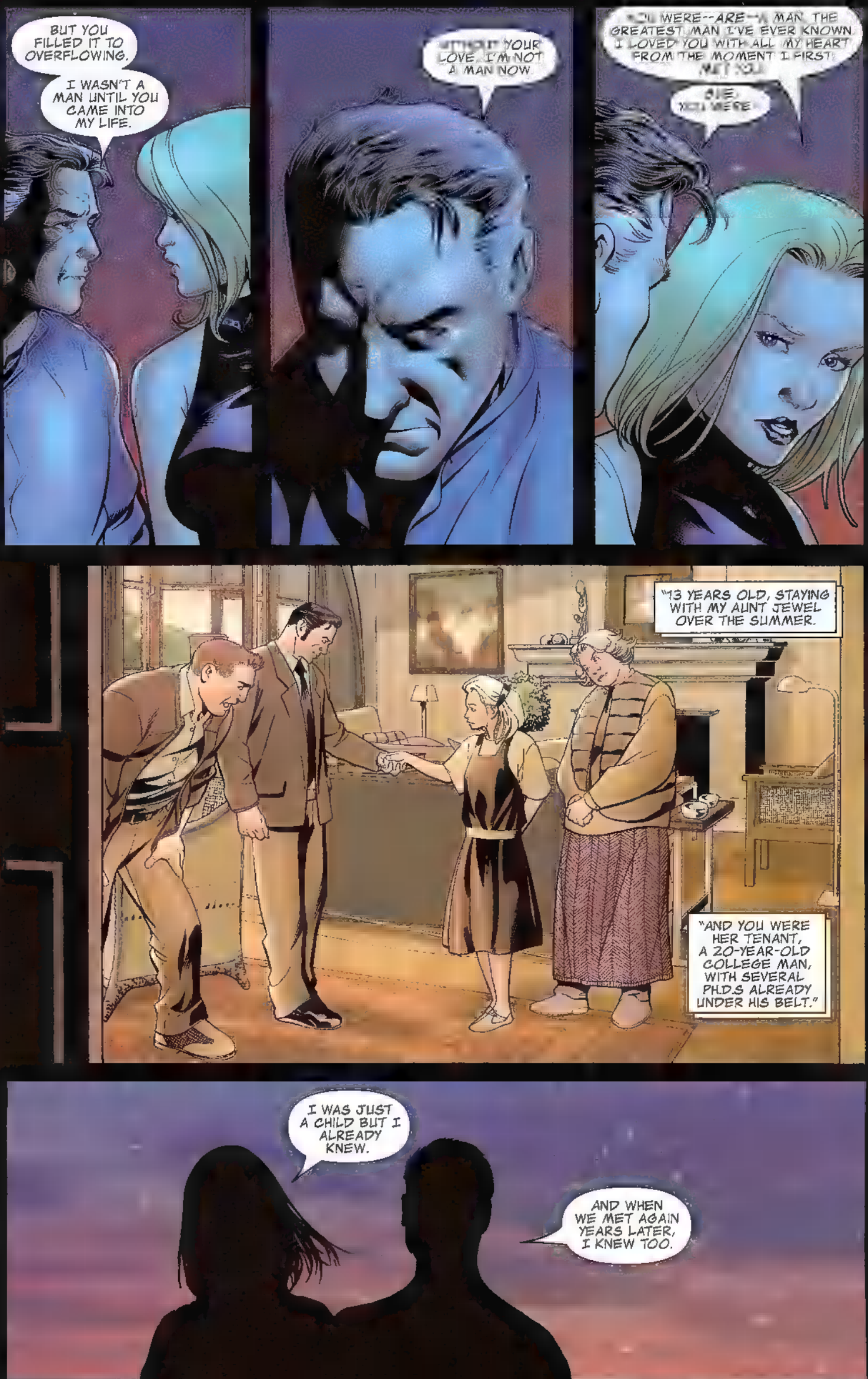

THE COSMIC RAYS HAD CHANGED THEM INTO FREAKS. BUT INSTEAD OF HIDING, THEY ENDED UP SAVING US ALL FROM AN ATTACK BY THE MOLE MAN.

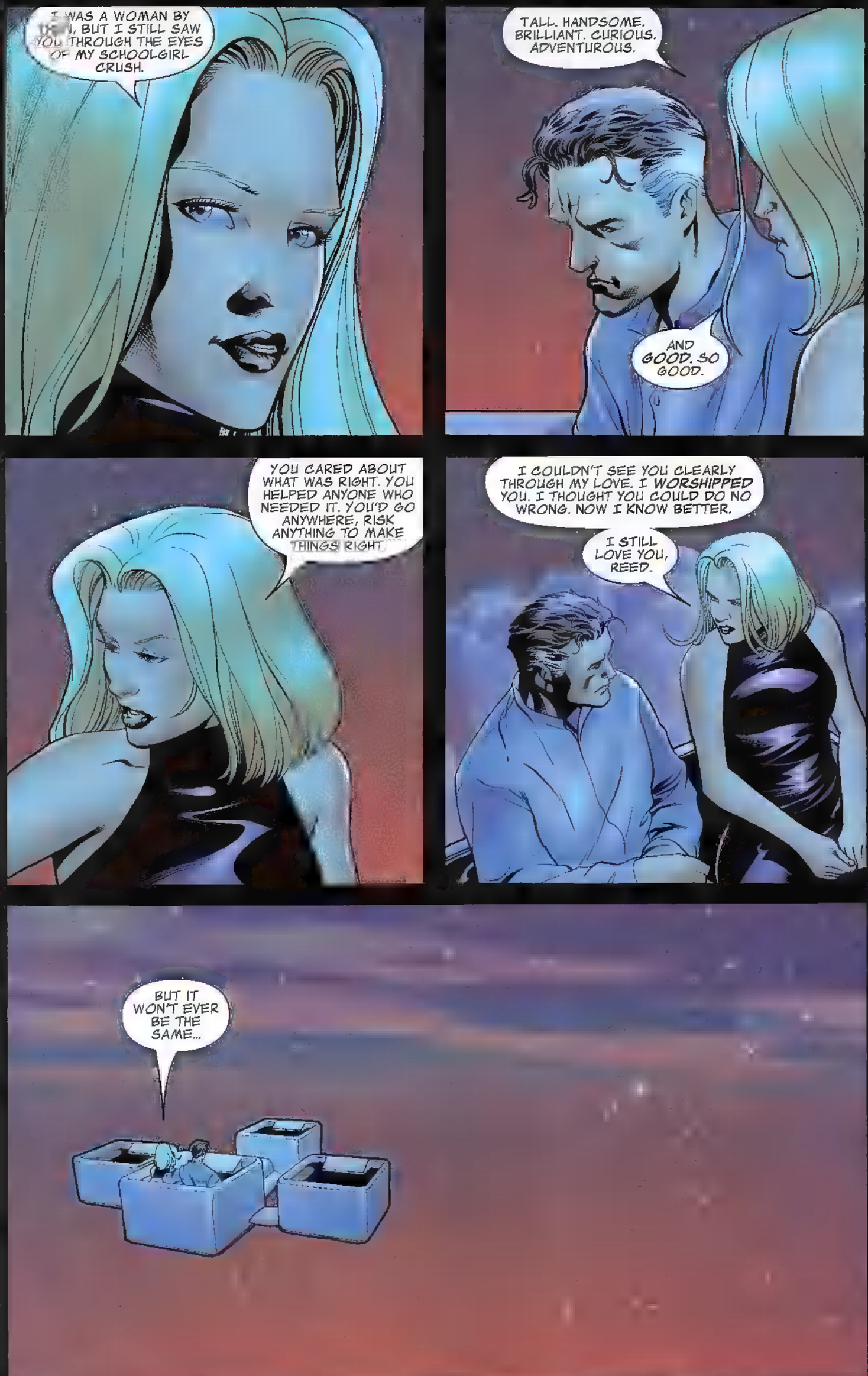
AND FROM THE START, THEY NEVER WORE MASKS...
...WE'VE ALL PLEDGED TO USE OUR FANTASTIC NEW ABILITIES IN SERVICE OF THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND FOR THE PROTECTION AND BETTERMENT OF MANKIND.
ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE, FIRST FANTASTIC FOUR PRESS CONFERENCE

DADDY LOOKS SKINNY!
WE WUZ ALL SKINNIER BACK THEN.
IT'S BEEN A COUPLE OF HOURS. DO YOU THINK THEY'RE COMING BACK?
TONIGHT? SURE, THEY PROMISED.
BUT THAT AIN'T THE REAL QUESTION, SQUIRT. WHAT YOU WANT TA KNOW IS, ARE THEY GOING TO STAY.
WHO? MOMMY AND DADDY?
:SQUEEEEL:
BENJAMIN J. GRIMM EXPRESS, GOIN' UP!
WHEEE!


IF I DIDN'T KNOW YOU BETTER, MR. RICHARDS, I'D SWEAR YOU WERE TRYING TO BE ROMANTIC.
IT'S NOT UNHEARD OF. JUST INFREQUENT, CLUMSY AND AWKWARD.
AND SWEET.
BUT I'VE NEVER DOUBTED THAT YOU LOVE ME, NOT FOR ONE SECOND.
THEN--
THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE, REED. IT'S NOT ABOUT LOVE, IT'S ABOUT TRUST.
I EXPLAINED TO YOU WHY I DID IT.
YOU EXPLAINED TO THE THINKER. I STILL WOULDN'T KNOW IF I HADN'T EAVESDROPPED.


I WAS TRYING TO PROTECT YOU ALL. I KNOW I WAS WRONG, BUT THAT'S WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO.
I KNOW.
IT'S A CLICHÉ BUT WHEN YOU TOOK THAT BLAST FOR ME AT THE RIOT, ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT WAS THE IRONY OF LOSING YOU BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO PROTECT ME.
IT HAPPENED IN CIVIL WAR #7. ON SALE NOW, AS IF YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE A COPY. -TOM
AND HERE WE ARE. AGAIN.
I CAN'T LOSE YOU, SUE. I WASN'T EVEN REALLY ALIVE UNTIL YOU CAME INTO MY LIFE.
REED...
I'M SERIOUS. I WAS AN EMPTY SHELL, TRYING TO FILL THE VOID WITH KNOWLEDGE. I'M A SMART GUY, SO I LEARNED A LOT, BUT NOT NEARLY SO MUCH AS TO FILL THE VOID.


BUT YOU FILLED IT TO OVERFLOWING.
I WASN'T A MAN UNTIL YOU CAME INTO MY LIFE.
WITHOUT YOUR LOVE, I'M NOT A MAN NOW.
"YOU WERE--ARE--A MAN THE GREATEST MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN. I LOVED YOU WITH ALL MY HEART FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST MET YOU.
AND YOU WERE.
"13 YEARS OLD, STAYING WITH MY AUNT JEWEL OVER THE SUMMER.
"AND YOU WERE HER TENANT, A 20-YEAR-OLD COLLEGE MAN, WITH SEVERAL PH.D.S ALREADY UNDER HIS BELT."
I WAS JUST A CHILD BUT I ALREADY KNEW.
AND WHEN WE MET AGAIN YEARS LATER, I KNEW TOO.


I WAS A WOMAN BY THEN, BUT I STILL SAW YOU THROUGH THE EYES OF MY SCHOOLGIRL CRUSH.
TALL. HANDSOME. BRILLIANT. CURIOUS. ADVENTUROUS.
AND GOOD. SO GOOD.
YOU CARED ABOUT WHAT WAS RIGHT. YOU HELPED ANYONE WHO NEEDED IT. YOU'D GO ANYWHERE, RISK ANYTHING TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.
I COULDN'T SEE YOU CLEARLY THROUGH MY LOVE. I WORSHIPPED YOU. I THOUGHT YOU COULD DO NO WRONG. NOW I KNOW BETTER.
I STILL LOVE YOU, REED.
BUT IT WON'T EVER BE THE SAME...

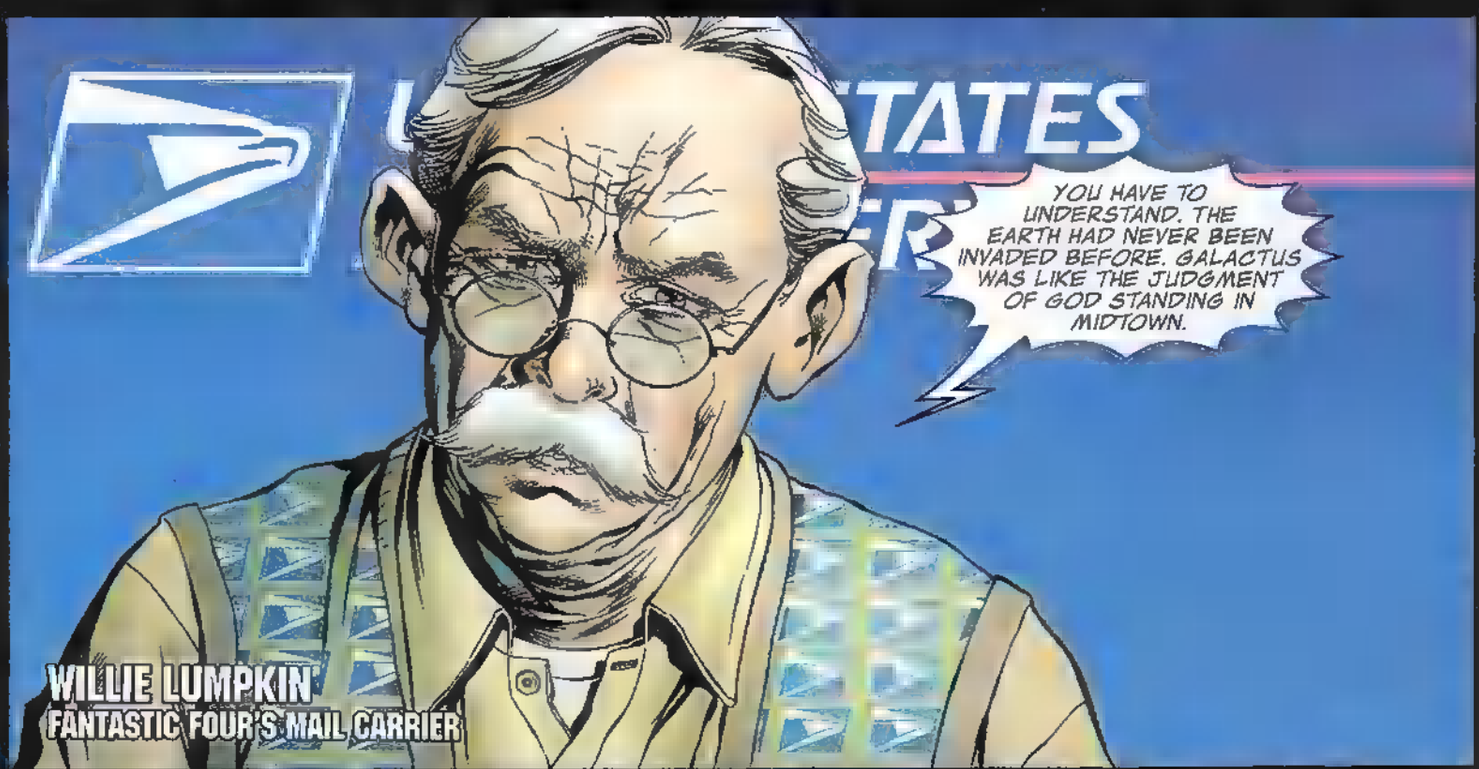
...A RIVALRY THAT CONTINUES TO THIS DAY BUT IS PERHAPS BEST EXEMPLIFIED BY THE TIME DOOM SOMEHOW MANAGED TO LAUNCH THEIR BAXTER BUILDING INTO SPACE.
OF COURSE RICHARDS OUTSMARTED DOOM, EVENTUALLY TURNING THE TABLES ON HIM. BUT DOOM SURVIVED TO PLAGUE THE FANTASTIC FOUR, AND THE CIVILIZED WORLD, AGAIN AND AGAIN.
T'CHALLA
KING OF WAKANDA
HE'LL NEVER DEFEAT DR. RICHARDS, THOUGH. HE CONTINUES TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE MOST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S ANTAGONISTS MAKE.
THEY AREN'T A TEAM. THEY'RE A FAMILY.

I HAVE LONG BEEN BEWILDERED BY DOOM'S IRRATIONAL HATRED OF REED RICHARDS. I CAN ONLY SURMISE IT'S SIMPLE JEALOUSY OF HIS IMMENSE INTELLECT.
PRINCE NAMOR
REGENT OF ATLANTIS
EVEN ON THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES IN CONFLICT, I HAVE FOUND RICHARDS TO BE A MAN OF UNQUESTIONABLE HONOR.
RICHARDS IS A DOLT. HIS RECKLESS ADVENTURING AND CONSTANT INTERFERENCE IN MY AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES' INTERNAL AFFAIRS HAS DESTABILIZED THE POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE ENTIRE WORLD.
DR. VICTOR VON DOOM
LORD OF LATVERIA

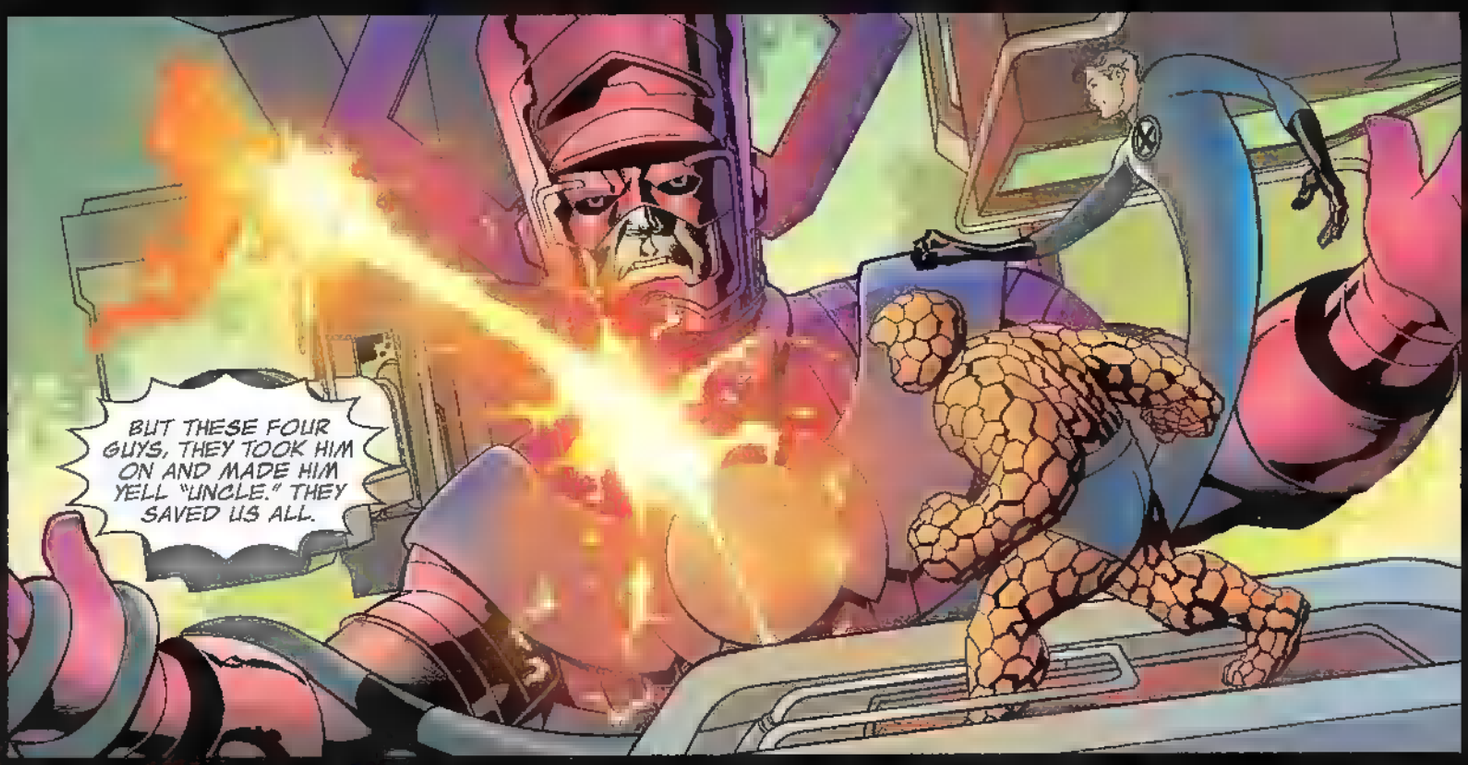
WE SEE THE EFFECTS OF HIS ACTIONS CURRENTLY. HE HAS BUILT AND MAINTAINED SECRET PRISONS, CONTRIBUTED TO THE DISSOLUTION OF YOUR COUNTRY'S HABEAS CORPUS, AND SEEKS NOW TO EXPORT HIS EVIL TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.
THE DAY WILL COME WHEN THAT WORLD WILL ■EG ME TO CONTAIN RICHARDS' EVIL FOR THEM. PERHAPS I WILL ANSWER THAT CALL.
UNTIL THAT DAY, ASK YOURSELF WHY RICHARDS HAS FAILED TO CURE THE PATHETIC CONDITION OF HIS "BEST FRIEND" BEN GRIMM.
THIS INTERVIEW IS OVER. DOOM HAS SPOKEN.
KRASSH
AAH, SHADDUP!

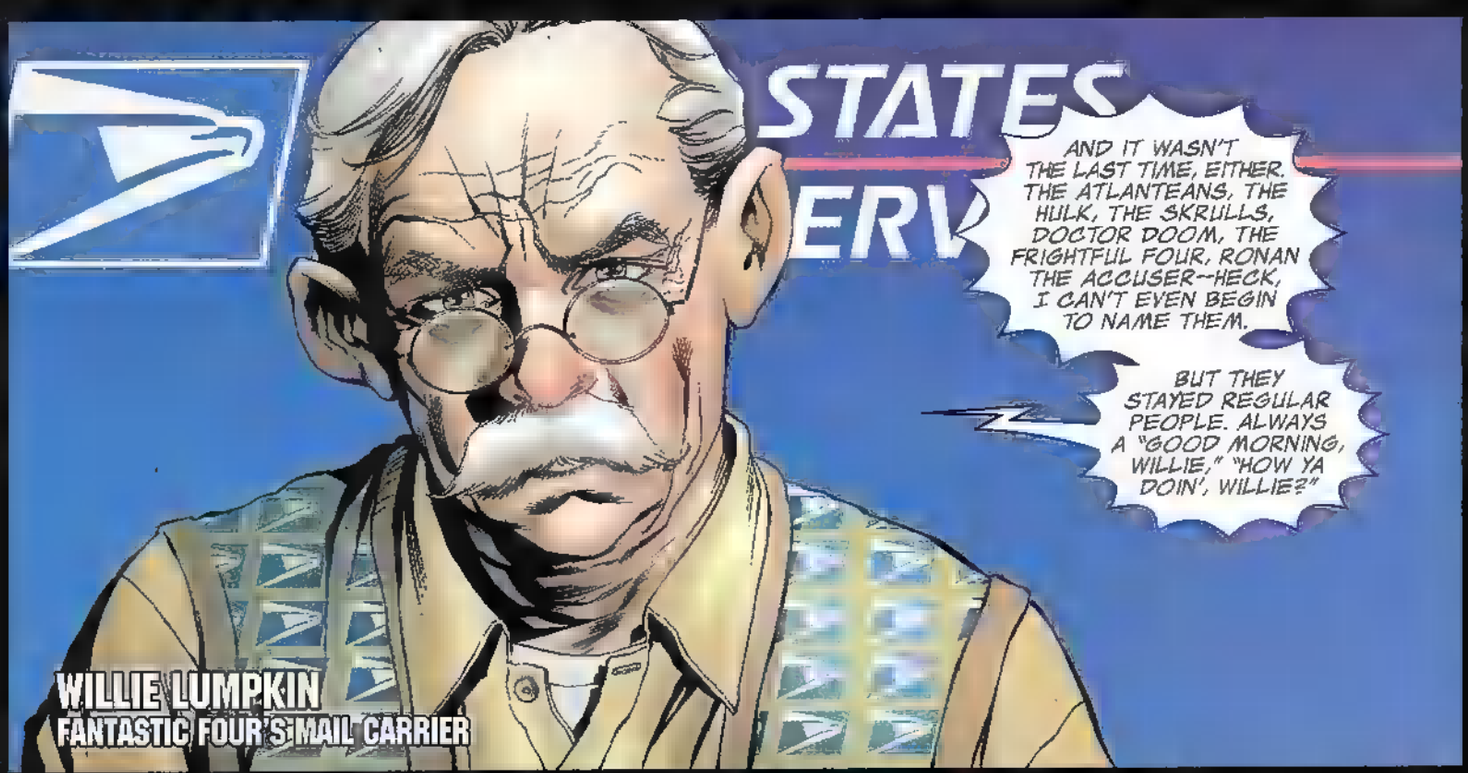
BWAAHHH!
YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE, THIS MEANS WAR.
HOLD STILL SO'S I CAN CLOBBER YOU!
CANDY.
DOUBLE OR NOTHING ON UNCLE BEN TO WIN THE FIGHT?
???
YOU WON FIVE PIECES OF CANDY ON THE FIRST BET. IF I WIN THIS BET, YOU HAVE TO GIVE ME THE FIVE PIECES BACK. BUT IF I LOSE, I HAVE TO GIVE YOU FIVE MORE PIECES.
'KAY.
WAIT A MINUTE. YOU GUYS GAMBLE ON OUR FIGHTS?
UH-HUH. FOR NOWALATERS.
WAY TO SET AN EXAMPLE, TORCHY.

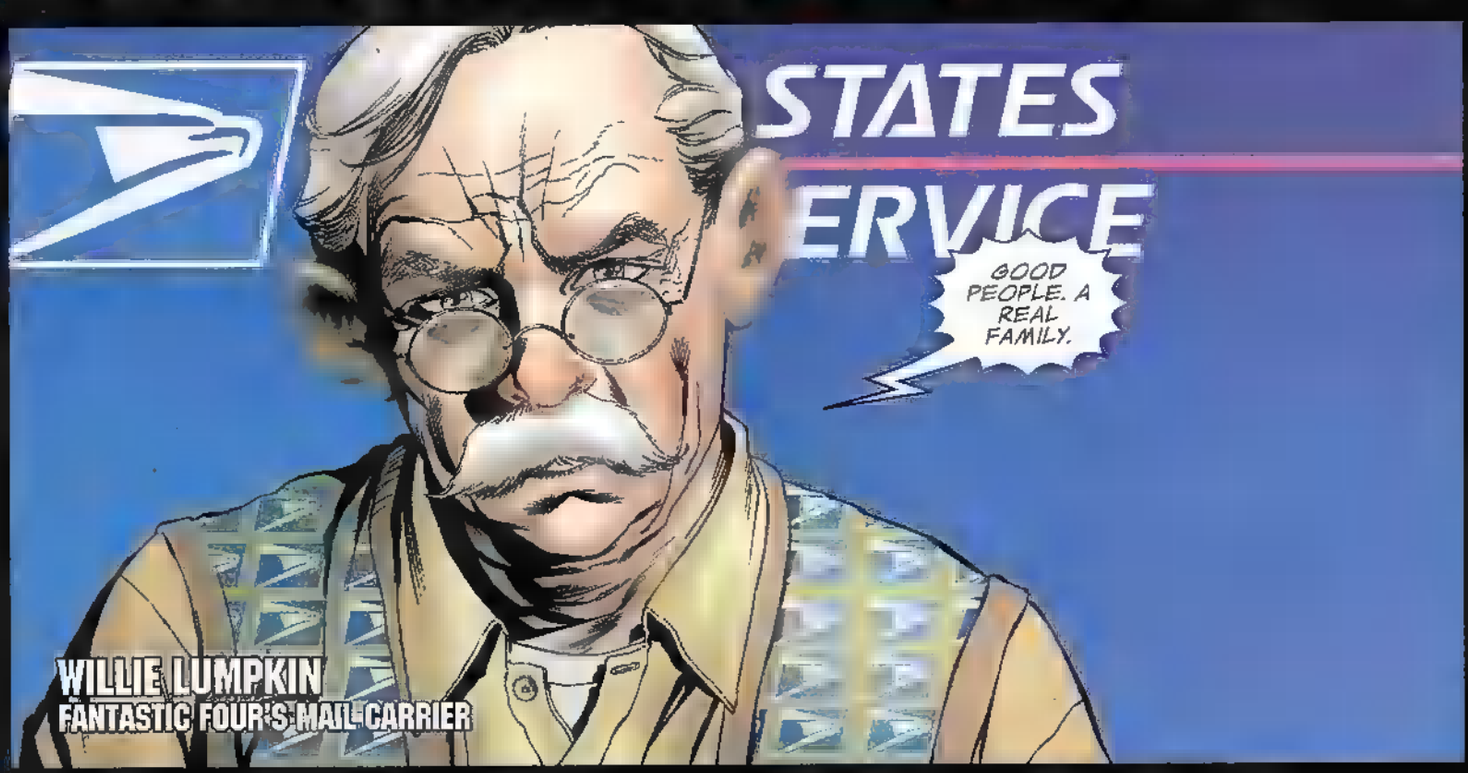
...AND HE JUST MARCHES RIGHT UP TO THE SILVER SURFER AND WHOMPS HIM GOOD!


YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND. THE EARTH HAD NEVER BEEN INVADED BEFORE. GALACTUS WAS LIKE THE JUDGMENT OF GOD STANDING IN MIDTOWN.
WILLIE LUMPKIN
FANTASTIC FOUR'S MAIL CARRIER

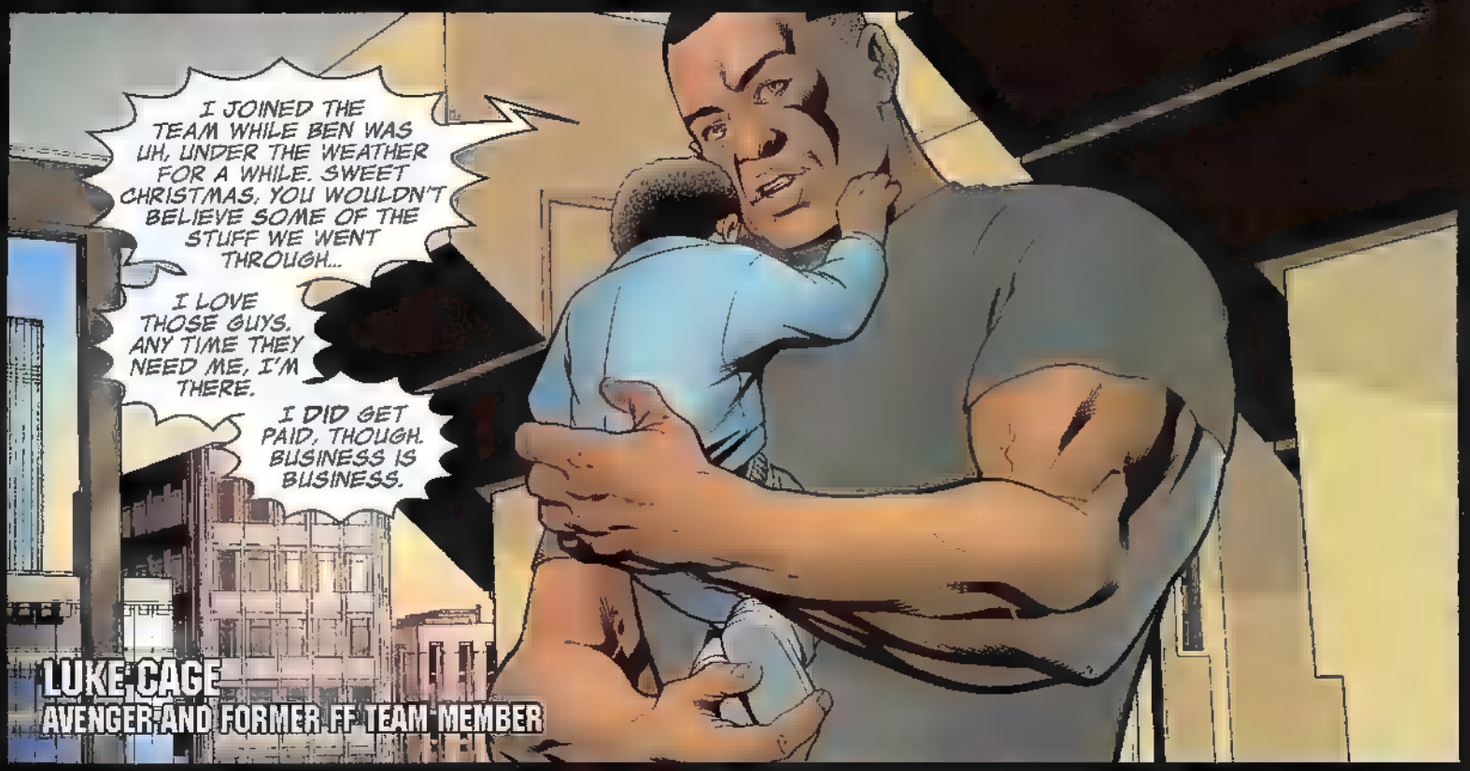
WE ALL THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF THE WORLD.


BUT THESE FOUR GUYS, THEY TOOK HIM ON AND MADE HIM YELL "UNCLE." THEY SAVED US ALL.

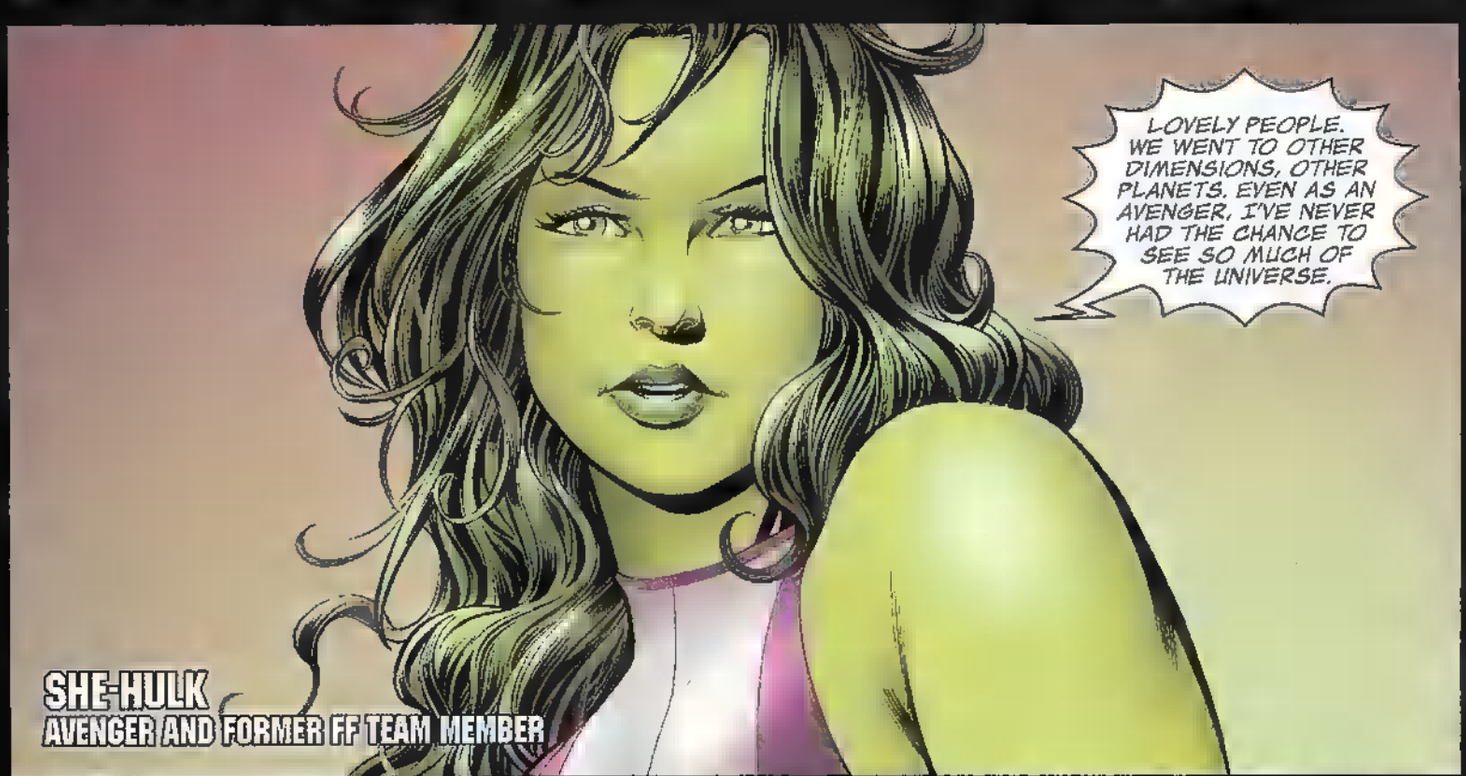

STATES
ERV
AND IT WASN'T THE LAST TIME, EITHER. THE ATLANTEANS, THE HULK, THE SKRULLS, DOCTOR DOOM, THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR, RONAN THE ACCUSER--HECK, I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO NAME THEM.
BUT THEY STAYED REGULAR PEOPLE. ALWAYS A "GOOD MORNING, WILLIE," "HOW YA DOIN', WILLIE?"
WILLIE LUMPKIN
FANTASTIC FOUR'S MAIL CARRIER


STATES
ERVICE
GOOD PEOPLE. A REAL FAMILY.
WILLIE LUMPKIN
FANTASTIC FOUR'S MAIL CARRIER

OH SURE, IT'S A FAMILY, BUT IT'S AN EXTENDED FAMILY. I HUNG OUT WITH JOHNNY IN COLLEGE AND THE RICHARDS TOOK ME IN LIKE I WAS ONE OF THEIR OWN.
WYATT WINGFOOT
FRIEND AND UNOFFICIAL TEAM MEMBER
I TRIED TO JOIN THE TEAM ONCE, BACK WHEN I WAS A KID. I BROKE INTO THE BAXTER BUILDING AND TOOK THEM ALL ON, REALLY SHOWING THEM MY STUFF, Y'KNOW?
SPIDER-MAN
AKA "PETER PARKER", AVENGER
WHEN THEY FINALLY CAUGHT ME I ASKED THEM HOW MUCH THEY PAID THEIR MEMBERS.
REED SAID, "IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY." I WAS SO EMBARRASSED...


I JOINED THE TEAM WHILE BEN WAS UH, UNDER THE WEATHER FOR A WHILE. SWEET CHRISTMAS, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE SOME OF THE STUFF WE WENT THROUGH...
I LOVE THOSE GUYS. ANY TIME THEY NEED ME, I'M THERE.
I DID GET PAID, THOUGH. BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.
LUKE CAGE
AVENGER AND FORMER FF TEAM MEMBER

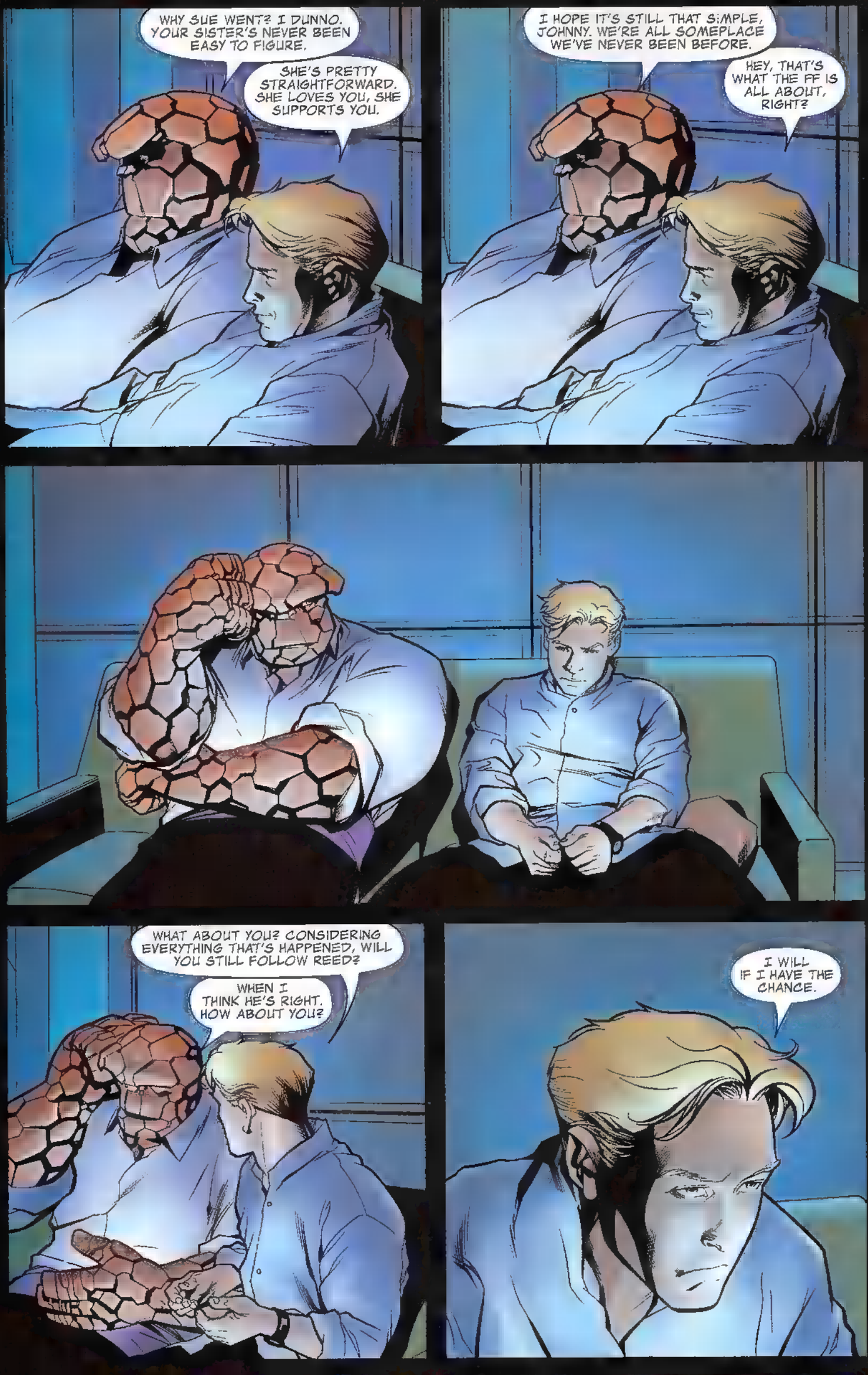
ME AND BEN HAD QUITE A THING GOING ON FOR A WHILE...HEH. DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE A PUN THERE.
EVERYBODY ON THE TEAM TREATED ME LIKE A WOMAN, NOT A FREAK. YOU COULD NOT ASK FOR BETTER FRIENDS.
SHARON VENTURA
AKA "SHE THING," FORMER FF TEAM MEMBER


LOVELY PEOPLE. WE WENT TO OTHER DIMENSIONS, OTHER PLANETS. EVEN AS AN AVENGER, I'VE NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO SEE SO MUCH OF THE UNIVERSE.
SHE-HULK
AVENGER AND FORMER FF TEAM MEMBER

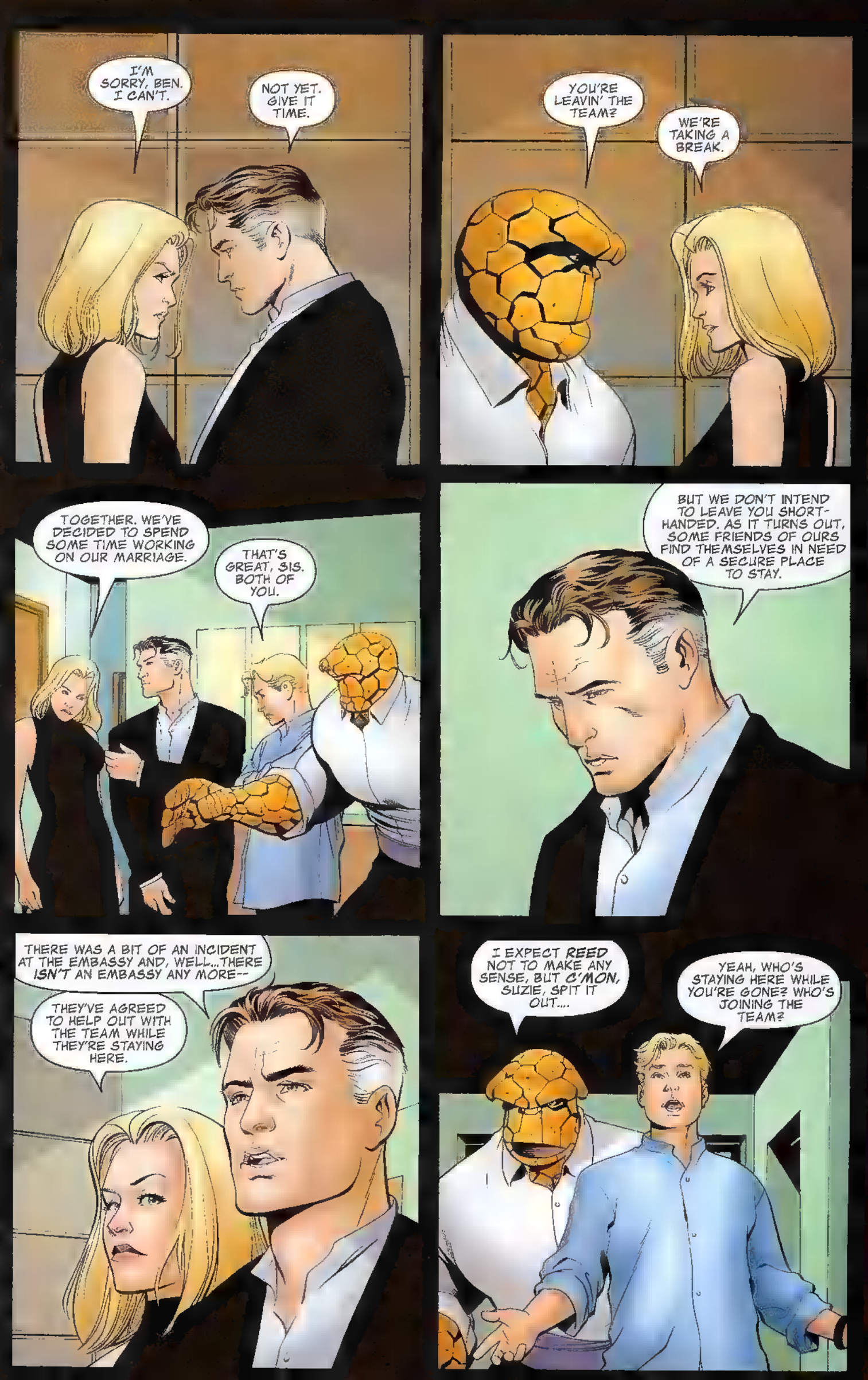
YEAH, WE GET AROUND. THAT'S BECAUSE O' STRETCHO.
YOU MEAN REED RICHARDS.
YEAH. BUT I'M HIS BUDDY, I CAN CALL HIM WHAT I WANT.
I WOULD NOT ARGUE WITH A MAN OF YOUR GIRTH.
WAY BEFORE.
REED WANTS TO KNOW STUFF, AND HE'LL GO ANYWHERE TO LEARN. WE COME WITH HIM TA KEEP HIS POINTY HEAD OUT OF TROUBLE. SOMETIMES WHILE WE'RE THERE, WE'LL MEET PEOPLE GETTING A RAW DEAL, SO WE FIX IT.
THAT'S WHAT WE DO.

LOOK, YOU CAN'T TAKE HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AWAY FROM HIM, BUT HE AIN'T MOTHER THERESA. HELL, MOTHER THERESA PROBABLY WASN'T MOTHER THERESA.
HE'S DONE A LOTTA GOOD STUFF, THAT DON'T MEAN HE DIDN'T JUST SCREW UP BIG-TIME.
WOLVERINE
AVENGER AND X-MEN MEMBER
WHEN LATELINE RETURNS, THE DARK SIDE OF REED RICHARDS. AND DOES THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT MEAN FANTASTIC FOUR NO MORE?
TIME FOR BED, LITTLE GUY.
I WANT TO SEE THE TV!
MEBBE I'LL TIVO IT FOR YOU. BUT I'M THINKING THIS MIGHT BE GROWN-UP STUFF.
AWWWW!
"AWWWW!"
REED'S TAKEN A LOT OF CRITICISM FOR HIS SUPPORT OF THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT. PEOPLE SAY HE'S CHANGED, THAT HIS BEHAVIOR "ISN'T LIKE HIM."
TONY STARK
AKA IRON MAN, DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

THAT'S BULL. REED'S DOING THE SAME THING HE'S ALWAYS DONE, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE AND DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO SECURE OUR SAFETY.
BUT THOSE ACTIONS HAVE CAUSED FRICTION IN THE FAMILY. BEFORE THE RECENT SURRENDER OF CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE PARDON THAT WAS GRANTED HIS SUPPORTERS--
NEVER I'D SEE THE DAY WHEN CAP WOULD QUIT A FIGHT
IF YOU THINK HE QUIT, YOU DON'T KNOW HIM AT ALL.
...SPLIT THE FANTASTIC FOUR SO DEEPLY THAT THERE ARE RUMORS OF AN IMPENDING DIVORCE BETWEEN REED AND SUE RICHARDS.
ANOTHER KEY TO THE CITY.
YEP. IF WE EVER FIND THE DOOR TO THE CITY, WE'RE IN.
WHY DO YOU THINK REED AND SUE AGREED TO SHOW UP FOR THE CEREMONY?
I'M GUESSING STARK ASKED REED TO GO FOR THE GOOD P.R.


WHY SUE WENT? I DUNNO. YOUR SISTER'S NEVER BEEN EASY TO FIGURE.
SHE'S PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD. SHE LOVES YOU, SHE SUPPORTS YOU.
I HOPE IT'S STILL THAT SIMPLE, JOHNNY. WE'RE ALL SOMEPLACE WE'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE.
HEY, THAT'S WHAT THE FF IS ALL ABOUT, RIGHT?
WHAT ABOUT YOU? CONSIDERING EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, WILL YOU STILL FOLLOW REED?
WHEN I THINK HE'S RIGHT. HOW ABOUT YOU?
I WILL IF I HAVE THE CHANCE.

THE FANTASTIC FOUR. LEGENDS WHO USHERED IN THE MODERN HEROIC AGE, SCIENTISTS AND EXPLORERS, HEROES TO SOME AND VILLAINS TO OTHERS.
THEIR SUCCESS IS UNDENIABLE. BUT BUFFETED BY THE TURBULENCE OF THEIR OWN BOLD CHOICES, THEIR CONTINUED SURVIVAL IS FAR FROM ASSURED.
FOR LATELINE, I'M CHRISTIAN FULLERTON. GOODNI--
THWEE
GUESS THAT'S IT. THEY'RE A NO-SHOW.
HEY, WE *SAID* WE WERE GOING TO BE HERE--
--DON'T YOU TRUST US ANYMOOOORRGH!
SUZIE! REED!
TOO HARD--
I NEED A FORCE-FIELD FOR ONE OF YOUR HUGS?
SORRY. I GOT CARRIED AWAY.


I'M SORRY, BEN. I CAN'T.
NOT YET. GIVE IT TIME.
YOU'RE LEAVIN' THE TEAM?
WE'RE TAKING A BREAK.
TOGETHER. WE'VE DECIDED TO SPEND SOME TIME WORKING ON OUR MARRIAGE.
THAT'S GREAT, SIS. BOTH OF YOU.
BUT WE DON'T INTEND TO LEAVE YOU SHORT-HANDED. AS IT TURNS OUT, SOME FRIENDS OF OURS FIND THEMSELVES IN NEED OF A SECURE PLACE TO STAY.
THERE WAS A BIT OF AN INCIDENT AT THE EMBASSY AND, WELL...THERE ISN'T AN EMBASSY ANY MORE--
THEY'VE AGREED TO HELP OUT WITH THE TEAM WHILE THEY'RE STAYING HERE.
I EXPECT REED NOT TO MAKE ANY SENSE, BUT C'MON, SUZIE, SPIT IT OUT....
YEAH, WHO'S STAYING HERE WHILE YOU'RE GONE? WHO'S JOINING THE TEAM?

Fantastic Four Fan Page

Happy 45th Anniversary to Reed, Sue, Johnny and Ben! Who ever thought back in 1961 that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's fabulous foursome would still be around to see the 21st Century? As a special treat, this month's letter column contains messages from some of the folks involved with chronicling the Fantastic Four's amazing lives throughout the years. Take it away, guys!

Wow, the 45th Anniversary of the Fantastic Four! I was only a one year old when this story came to life in 1961, and it's amazing that it is still going strong today! That in itself signifies that great characters and story line can endure the test of time.

When I was young, I looked upon Jack Kirby as my "dad", not Jack Kirby the artist, comic book creator. I knew what he did for a living was a little different from most other dads, but still it wasn't till later on in life that I started to view him differently. He wasn't just my father, but an amazing artist and story teller!

I would have to say that the Fantastic Four caught my attention because I loved the character "The Thing." Ben Grimm, the tough guy with the Brooklyn accent, reminded me of where my father grew up.

I feel what makes these characters so intriguing is that their human personalities go along with their super powers. They are very human, make mistakes, and have problems like the rest of us. These special qualities I feel endear them to the reader.

Also, there are some very memorable characters that have come out of the Fantastic Four, such as the evil Dr. Doom, and one of my favorites, the Silver Surfer!

I am glad that there are very talented people who have carried the torch so future generations can still enjoy these wonderful characters.

It is quite an honor that my father is still getting recognition for his work, and for his contribution to the comic book industry. My hope is that his legacy will continue and not be forgotten.

Happy 45th Anniversary, Fantastic Four!

Lisa Kirby

The year was 1961. I was an eleven year old comics fan making his weekly trek to the local drugstores. There were three drugstores in my hometown and not all of them carried all the comics I wanted. In those days it was all DC for this kid. Then I noticed something new and different staring at me from the comics rack. FANTASTIC FOUR #1. I purchased that issue and fell in love with the characters. The art was exciting and dynamic. The writing was so real and three-dimensional. And for the first time there were names attached to the work. Stan Lee and J. Kirby! They were my heroes.

Flash forward thirty years. Marvel Editor Ralph Macchio offers me the penciling chores on, sound the trumpets, FANTASTIC FOUR. I initially turned down the offer due to an overly committed schedule. I thought about the FF all weekend and remembered that day back in '61 when I first met Reed, Sue, Ben and Johnny. I called Ralph very, VERY early Monday morning and accepted the job. Teamed with writer Tom DeFalco, I enjoyed a wondrous ride for nearly five years. Thanks to Ralph for the job. Thanks to Stan and Jack who built the ride.

FF Fan for life,
Paul Ryan

FF Penciler, 1991-1996

Dear all,

I'm old enough, only just, to remember the very first appearance of the Fantastic Four, and as I recall, although I was immediately won over by the novelty, I didn't recognize their uniqueness. Sure they were odd and quirky but they weren't that different from the other costumed adventurers who, in the tradition of noble heroics, fought evil whenever it reared its ugly head. However, as time passed I realized how wrong I had been. The thrill of novelty didn't fade, it grew as the FF's universe expanded and their adventures became ever more...well, Fantastic. But, the most inexplicable thing was that four characters at the center of the alien wonder became more ordinary...More "real"--And somewhere along the way I realized I had developed a genuine affection for this singular foursome. Now, forty-five years later, I have accepted that it is pointless to even attempt to rationalize the how or why I just thank the "The Man" and "The King" for magic that filled my youth with wonder and dreams.

With respect and admiration,
Alan Davis
FF Penciler, 1998
FF: THE END Writer and Penciler

The FANTASTIC FOUR began a revolution and changed the way we think about comic books. It was also the result of a mistake because Stan Lee didn't really listen to his boss. Martin Goodman owned the company that would eventually become Marvel Comics. After learning that a new comic called *The Justice League of America* was selling well for his competition, Martin told Stan to copy the formula. The JLA was a traditional team book that featured 1960 versions of some

MOLLY LAZER & AUBREY SITTERSON
ASSISTANT EDITORS

TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

Golden Age super-heroes. I assume Martin expected Stan to resurrect Captain America, Human Torch, Sub-Mariner, Miss America and Whizzer to produce a modern version of the company's old All-Winners Squad. It didn't happen. Instead, Stan created four new characters (okay, one was an update) and introduced a team that was far from traditional. They didn't have costumes, secret identities and weren't particularly nice to each other. Their stories featured big monsters and bug-eyed aliens. The plots were simple, the characterizations complex, and the dialogue sarcastic. It was a super hero team book for people who hated super hero team books and it laid the foundation for the mighty Marvel style of storytelling. It also inspired quite a few of us to become comic book creators.

By the way, Stan eventually gave Martin the book he requested. It was called the AVENGERS, and we all know how traditional that team turned out!

Tom DeFalco
FF Writer, 1991-1996

Dear FF Fan Page,

Is this still Earth-616? Is it possible? How could it be the 45th Anniversary of the Fantastic Four? Sheesh.

In my alternate dimension, about half that time has passed, so I can still remember those halcyon days at Merry Marvel with Stan and Jack bouncing around the office when they met for their (now labled) "story conferences." Definitely two of the finest people I've ever met.

What a wild and wacky time! The four members of the FF family were so real to us that they seemed like fellow co-workers, each so unique and three-dimensional. Such amazing powers, would you choose to become invisible at will? Be impermeable to weapons and attackers? S-T-R-E-T-C-H any which way? (Maybe best to leave the "Flame On!" alone--too much paper around.)

I'm saddened that Jack and Roz aren't here to toast this milestone with us. I wish the FF and their current Marvel caretakers the best for the next 45. Oddly enough, they don't seem to have aged. Neither has Stan. Me, either. =)

'Nuff Said.
Flo Steinberg
Stan's Secretary, 1963-1968

I well remember the summer day in 1961 when I came upon a copy of FANTASTIC FOUR #1 in a store in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, soon after graduating from college. It was as if Plastic Man, the Human Torch, and Invisible Scarlett O'Neil had teamed up with one of those monsters from Strange Journeys of Astonishing Suspense--with art by Jack Kirby of the old Simon & Kirby team, yet! From that day to this, FF has remained my favorite concept of all those devised by Stan Lee with Kirby, Ditko, or whoever. Spider-Man? He never even came close.

In the 1970s, when my turn came to write FF, I found myself paralyzed in a way I'd never been when scripting X-MEN, AVENGERS, et al. I could play around with the edges of FF, but I couldn't bring myself to change anything about the mag, not really. It was already perfect, just the way it was! It really was, for a very long time, "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!"

Best Wishes,
Roy Thomas
FF Writer, 1972-1973, 1975-1977

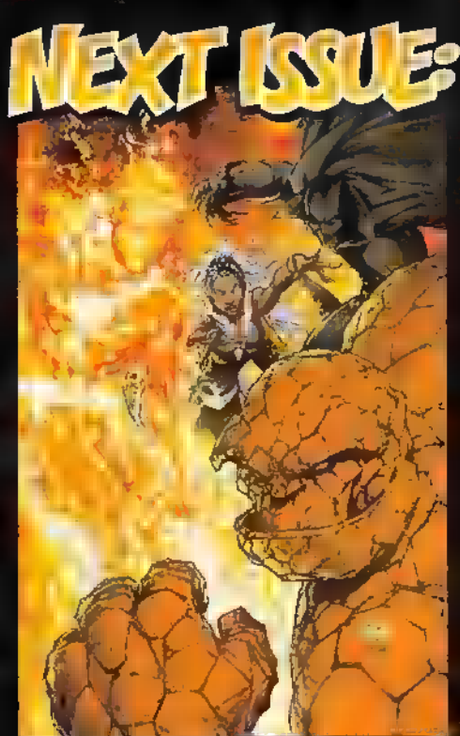
Dear Jack, Stan, Tom and Marvel,

Back in the early-mid 70s when I was transitioning from reading the FANTASTIC FOUR comics my father had bought and started buying them for myself, it might have been a dream of mine to draw their adventures, but I never had an inkling that it would ever be--something that would truly happen. The FF comic was always a favorite of mine for the utter wonder of imagination and talent that was on exhibition by the creative folks involved over the years. The book that gave birth to the Marvel Universe held a special place in my heart from the first time I read an issue. Fast forward almost 30 years--and I find myself actually drawing the book, working with one of my favorite writers and friends, Mark Waid. It's no wonder I have to keep pinching myself from time to time to make sure I'm really awake. So I'd like to thank Jack Kirby and Stan Lee for creating such a wonderfully timeless and inspiring book--and I'd like to thank Tom Brevoort and Marvel Entertainment for giving me the opportunity to be a part of such a special legacy in super hero comics. It's a special experience I'll never forget.

Mike Wieringo
FF Penciler, 2002-2005

That's all, folks! Join us next month, when we welcome new teammates Storm and the Black Panther and new creative team Dwayne McDuffie and Paul Pelletier!

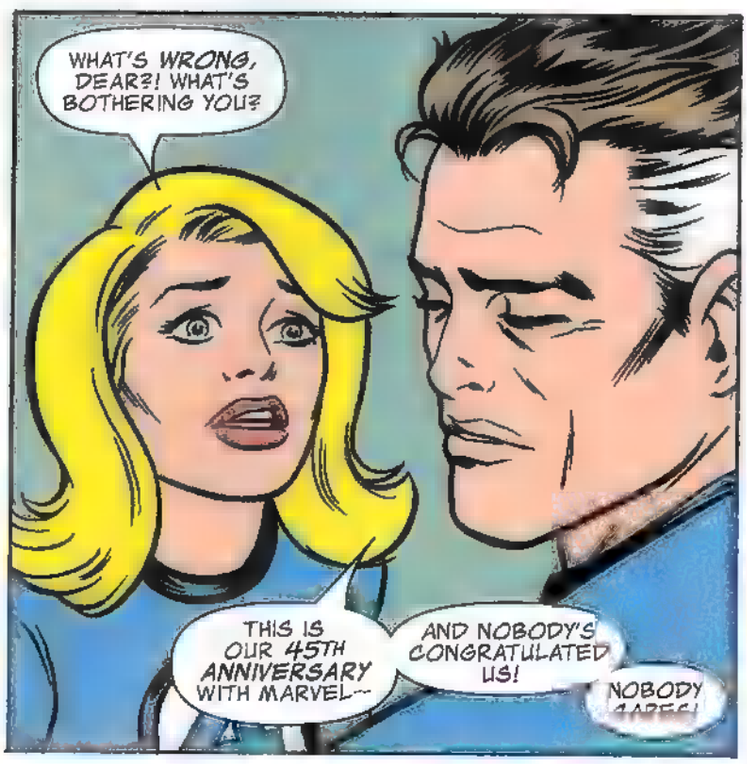
Molly Lazar
FF Assistant Editor, 2004



FANTASTIC FOUR FAN PAGE c/o MARVEL COMICS
417 5TH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10016
E-MAIL: MHEROES@MARVEL.COM
MARK E-MAIL "OKAY TO PRINT"
IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS PRINTED, PLEASE LET US KNOW. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT AND LENGTH.

THE PENTAGON
THE MOLE MAN AND HIS SUBTERRANEAN ARMY ARE INVADING OUR WORLD!
DID YOU CONTACT THE FANTASTIC FOUR?
YES, BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, GENERAL--
MR. FANTASTIC HUNG UP ON ME!
CALL ENDED
CLICK

HEY, STRETCHO, YOU AIN'T NEVER REFUSED A CALL FOR HELP BEFORE!
SO WHAT?
LET SOME OTHER SUPER HEROES SAVE THE WORLD FOR A CHANGE.
IT'S DC'S TURN!


WHAT'S WRONG, DEAR?! WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU?
THIS IS OUR 45TH ANNIVERSARY WITH MARVEL--
AND NOBODY'S CONGRATULATED US!
NOBODY CARES!

ATTACK, MY INVINCIBLE ONES!
THE SURFACE DWELLERS WILL BE OUR SHIELDS!
NO ONE WILL SHOOT AT YOU FOR FEAR OF HITTING THEM!
NO FAN

IF THIS BE... ANNIVERSARY!

A FRANKLY FARCICAL FLIGHT OF FANCY AND FESTIVITIES BY

STAN "THE MAN" LEE
WRITER

NICK "KNACK" DRAGOTTA
PENCILER

MIKE "DOC" ALLRED
INKER

LAURA "NURSE" ALLRED
COLORIST

RUS "WOO-WOO" WOOTON
LETTERER

MOLLY "INDUSTRIAL" LAZER & AUBREY "SIT-ON-IT" SITTERSON
ASSISTANT EDITORS

TOM "THE BOMB" BREVOORT
EDITOR

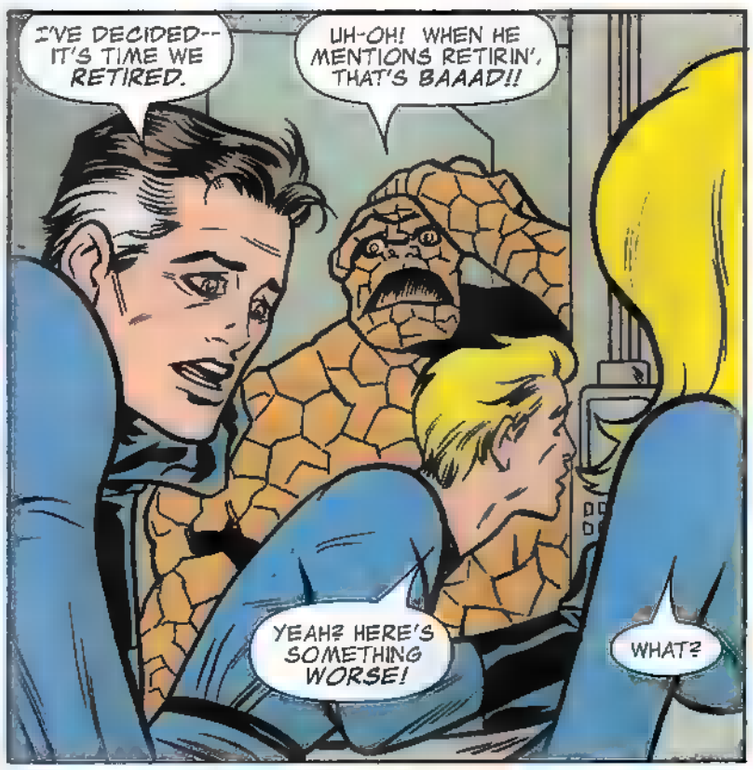
JOE "THE SHMOE" QUESADA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

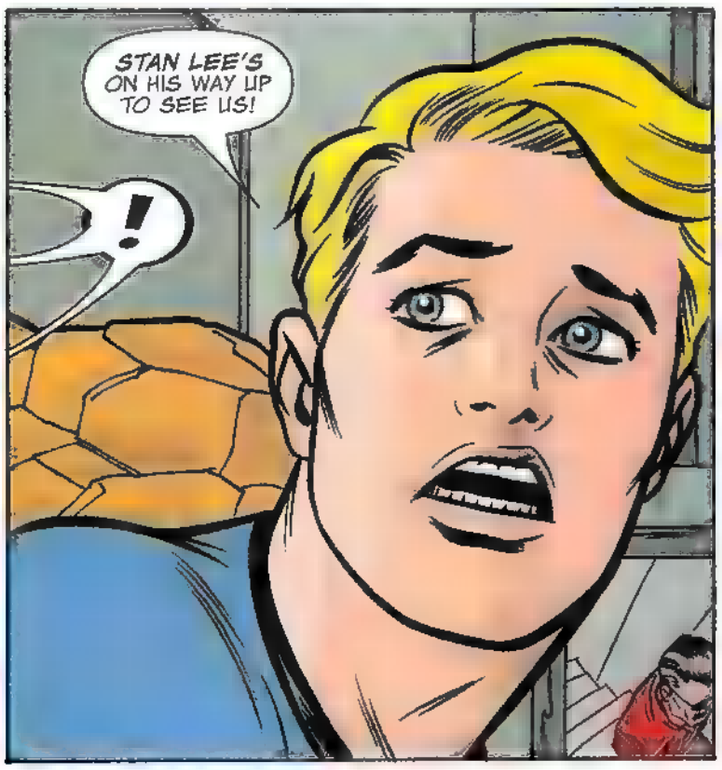
DAN "THE PLAN" BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

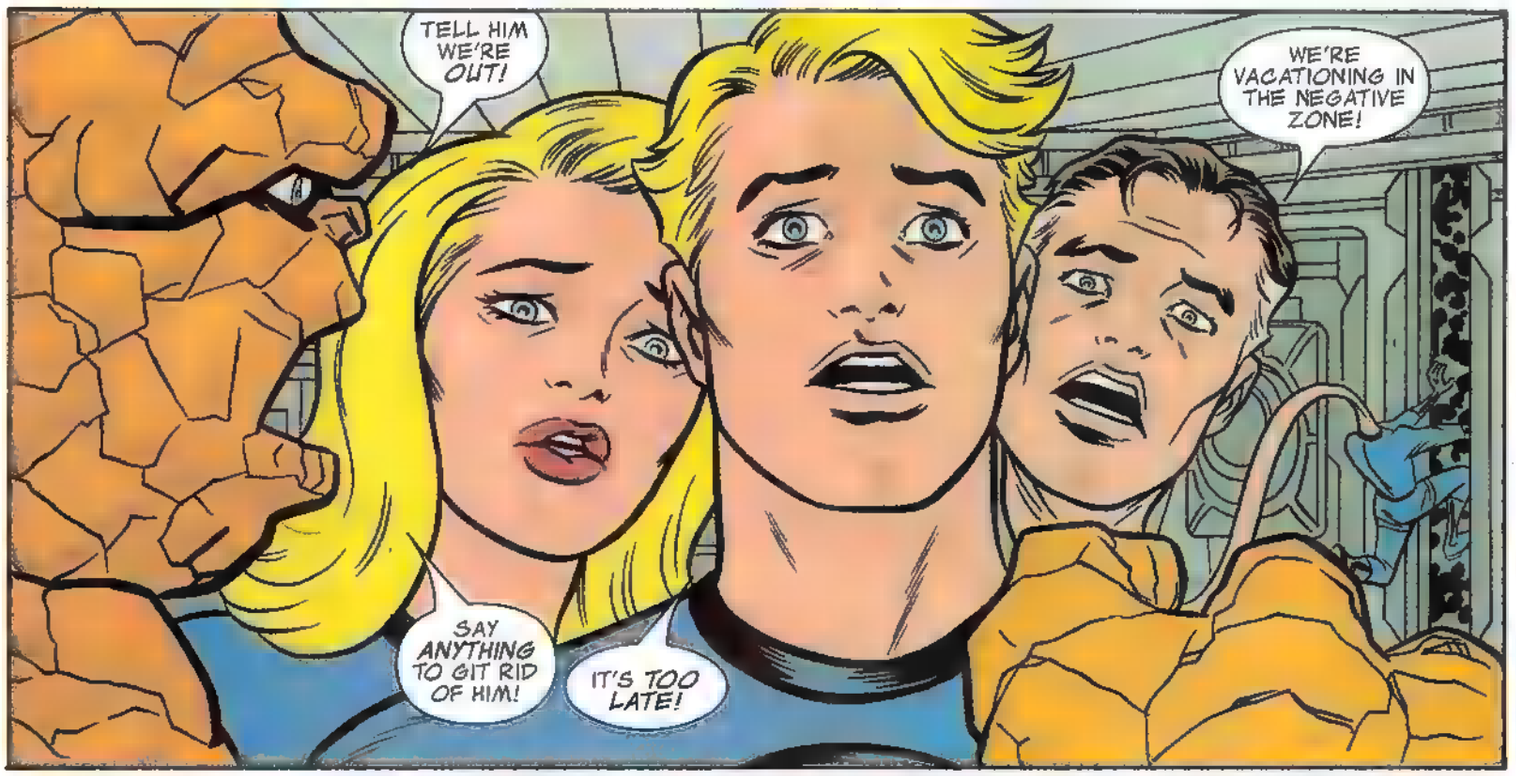
EVERY STREET, EVERY BUILDING MUST BE OURS!
NOTHING CAN STOP US!
707

MEANWHILE...
IF WE BEEN AROUND FOR 45 YEARS--
HOW COME WE DON'T LOOK ANY OLDER?
YOU KIDDIN'? WHO CAN TELL HOW OLD A WALKIN' ROCK PILE LIKE YOU LOOKS?

BEN'S RIGHT.
WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE AGED.
IT'S BECAUSE WE WERE HIT BY COSMIC RAYS.
DO THE MATH!


I'VE DECIDED-- IT'S TIME WE RETIRED.
UH-OH! WHEN HE MENTIONS RETIRIN', THAT'S BAAAD!!
YEAH? HERE'S SOMETHING WORSE!
WHAT?

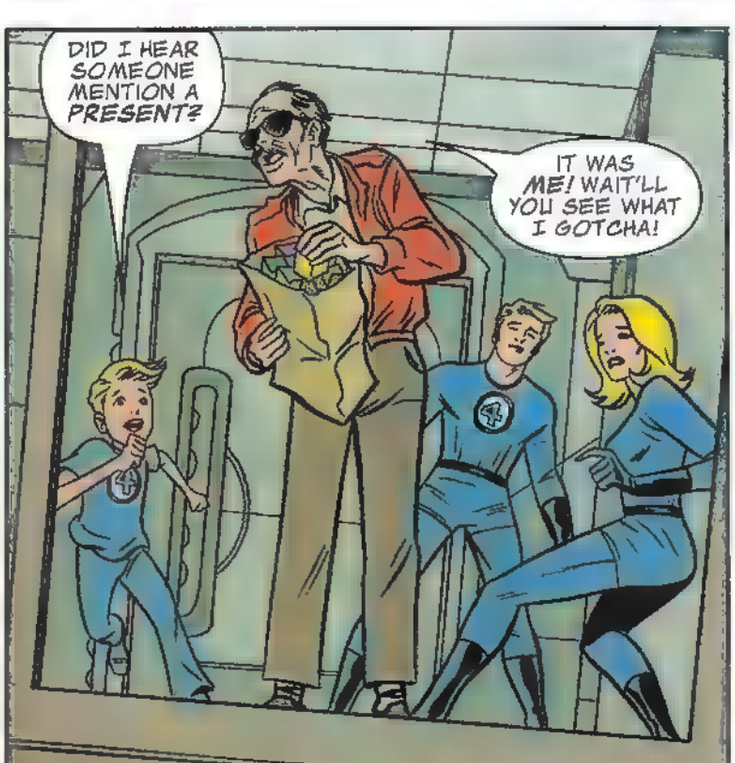

STAN LEE'S ON HIS WAY UP TO SEE US!
!


TELL HIM WE'RE OUT!
WE'RE VACATIONING IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE!
SAY ANYTHING TO GIT RID OF HIM!
IT'S TOO LATE!

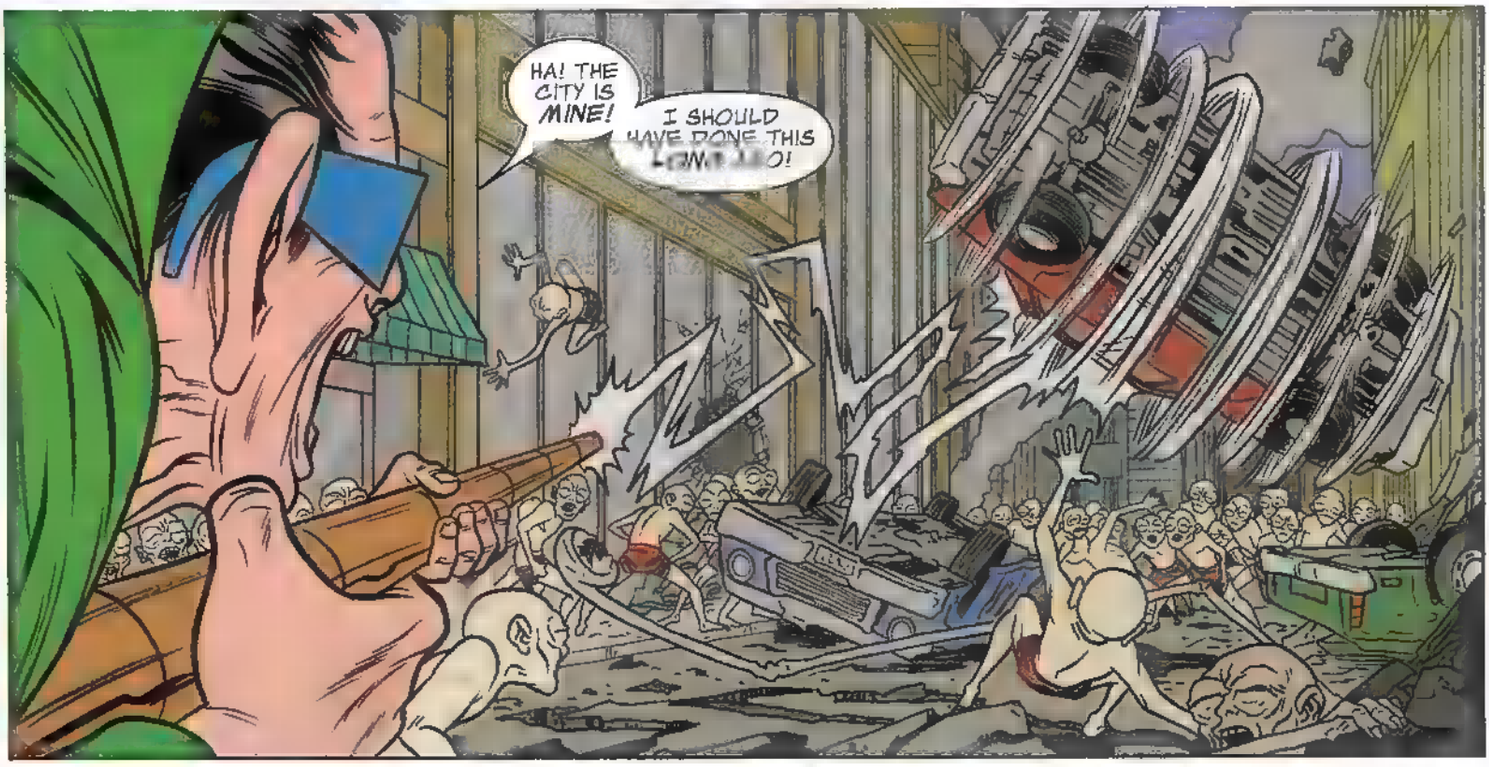
HI, GUYS. HOW Y'DOIN'?
GREAT-- 'TIL NOW!

I BROUGHT A PRESENT FOR LITTLE FRANKLIN.
WOW, LOTS OF EXCITEMENT OUTSIDE!
MUST BE SHOOTING A NEW MOVIE.

CAN'T YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN *INVASION* AND A *MOVIE*?
SURE! A MOVIE'S MORE EXPENSIVE!

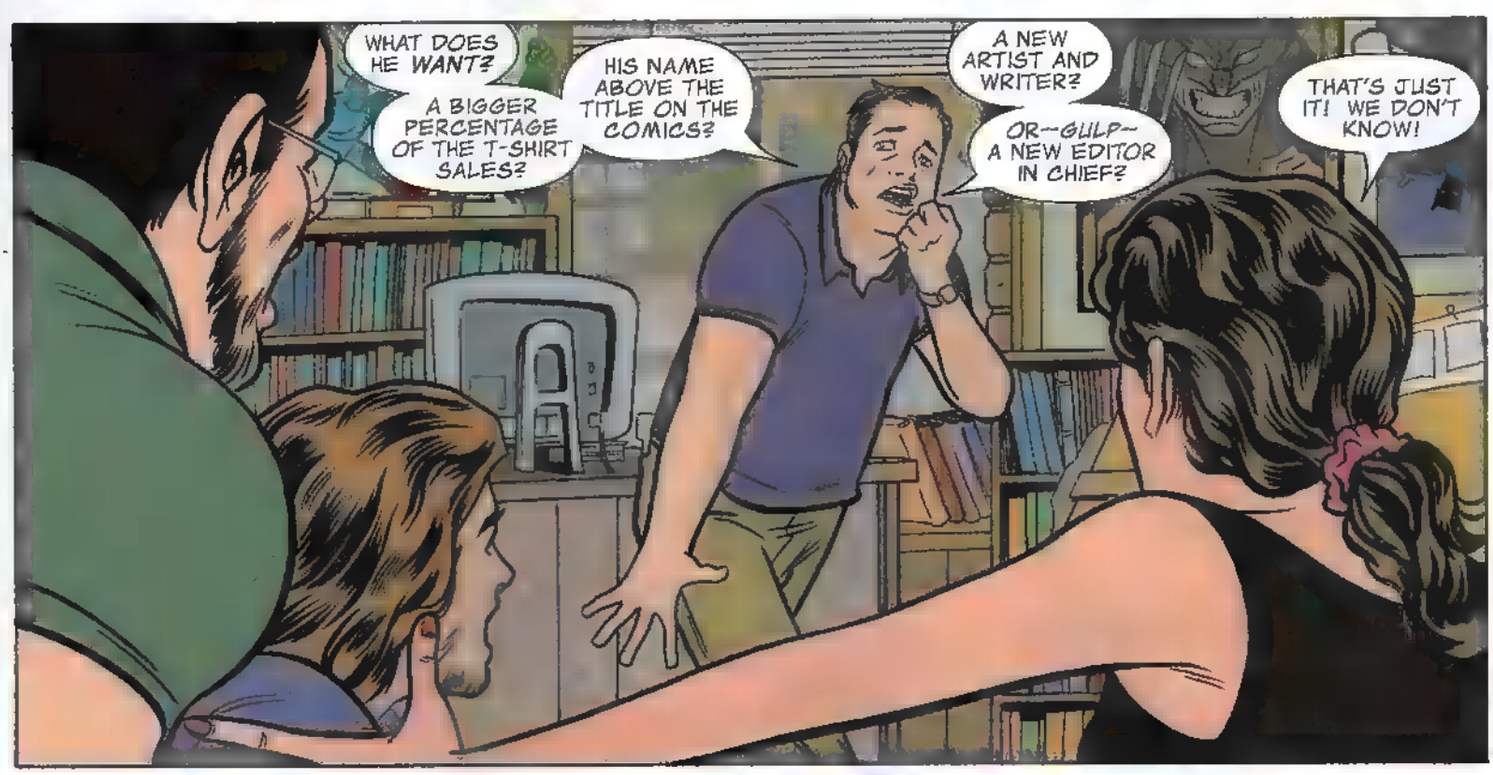

DID I HEAR SOMEONE MENTION A *PRESENT*?
IT WAS *ME!* WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT I GOTCHA!

THEY'LL HELP YOU LEARN THE ALPHABET WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING.
STAN, YOU LAST SAW FRANKLIN YEARS AGO!
HE'S GROWN UP SINCE THEN.
YOU MEAN I SHOULD'A BROUGHT BIGGER BLOCKS?
LOOK, HE'S SO CHOKED UP WITH GRATITUDE HE CAN'T EVEN THANK ME.
MEANWHILE...
GET MY CHOPPER!
I'LL GO TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR MYSELF!
THEY'VE GOT TO SAVE US FROM THE MOLE MAN!
HE'S DOING OVER THE WHOLE CITY!
THE EXTRA COUNTRY WILL BE NEXT!
ONLY THE FF CAN SAVE US!
REED, WE CAN'T FAIL THE CITY IN ITS HOUR OF NEED!
THEY SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT BEFORE IGNORING OUR 45TH ANNIVERSARY!
THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE AFRAID TO FACE MY LEGIONS!
THIS TIME THE MOLE MAN SHALL WIN--AT LAST!


HA! THE CITY IS MINE!
I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS LONG AGO!

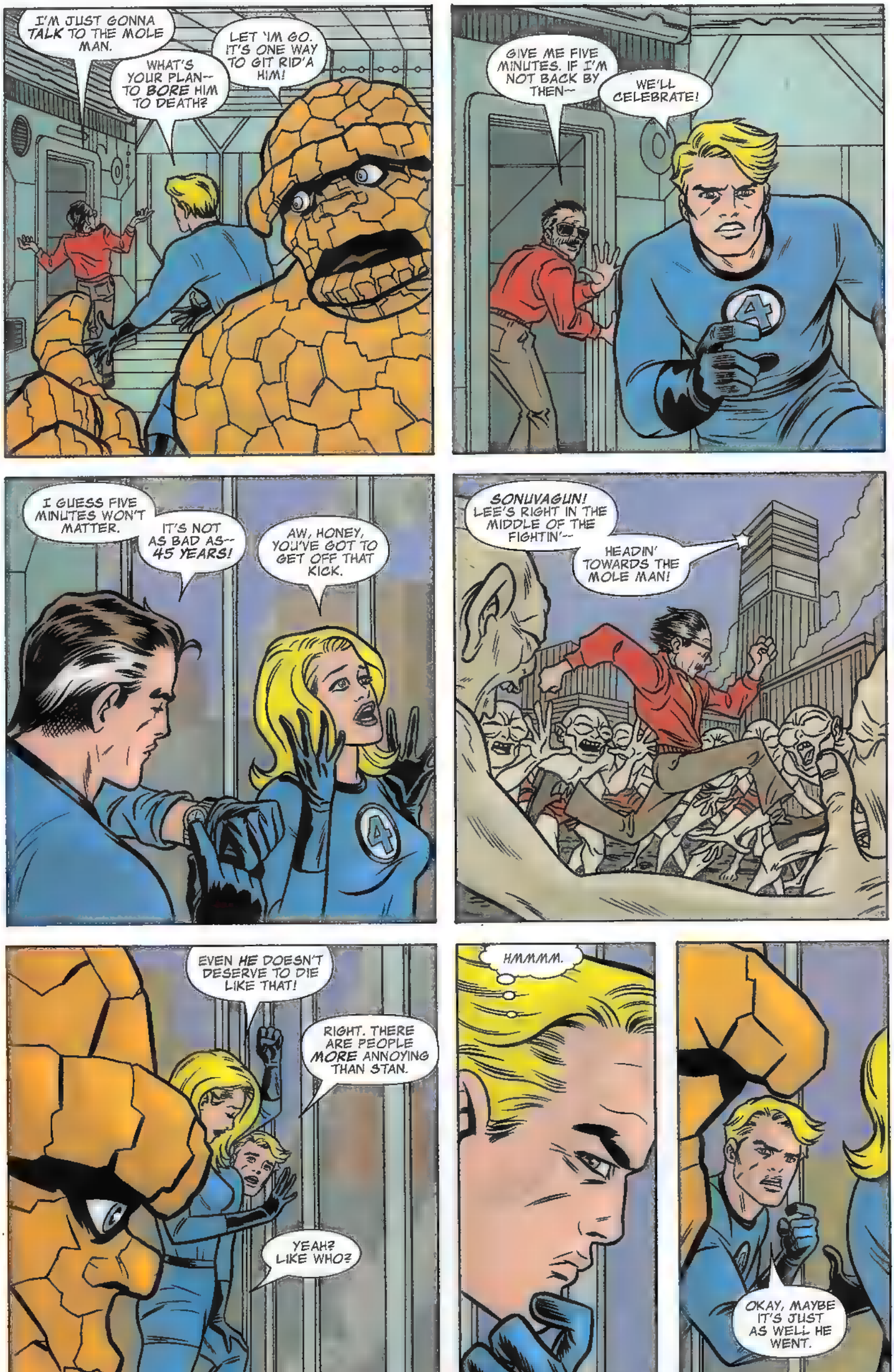
MEANWHILE, AT THE FABLED OFFICES OF MARVEL COMICS...
JOE! WE HAVE A CRISIS!
EDITING FOR DUMMIES
THE MOLE MAN'S TAKING OVER NEW YORK!
NO PROBLEMO! THE FF'LL STOP 'IM!

THAT'S JUST IT! REED REFUSES TO GET INVOLVED!
I FEARED THIS WOULD HAPPEN SOME DAY!


WHAT DOES HE WANT?
A BIGGER PERCENTAGE OF THE T-SHIRT SALES?
HIS NAME ABOVE THE TITLE ON THE COMICS?
A NEW ARTIST AND WRITER?
OR--GULP-- A NEW EDITOR IN CHIEF?
THAT'S JUST IT! WE DON'T KNOW!

REED, IF YOU WON'T STOP THE MOLE MAN, I WILL!
FLAME ON!
YEAH, ME TOO--
--'CAUSE IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
EVEN THOUGH I DON'T HAVE A CUTE LITTLE CATCH PHRASE LIKE JOHNNY AND BEN--
I KNOW, I KNOW. YOU'RE WITH THEM, TOO.
WE GOTTA GIT DOWN THERE NOW-- WHILE THERE'S STILL A "THERE" LEFT!
OKAY, YOU WIN.
CAN'T LET YOU FIGHT WITHOUT ME.
AFTER ALL, I'M THE LEADER OF OUR TEAM, THE BRAINS, THE MOTIVATOR, THE INSPIRER, THE--
JEEZ, CAN'T YA EVER JUST SAY "OKAY" LIKE ANYONE ELSE?
WAIT! I'VE AN IDEA!
SIT ON IT! MAYBE IT'LL HATCH!

LOOK, FIGHTING NEVER SETTLES ANYTHING.
MAYBE THERE'S A BETTER WAY!
BETTER THAN FIGHTIN'? BITE YER TONGUE!
BUT YOU LOVE FIGHTING!
YOU DID THE HULK AND NICK FURY AND--
YOU HAD JACK KIRBY DRAW SOME OF THE GREATEST FIGHT SCENES EVER!
DON'T CLOUD THE ISSUE WITH FACTS!
WE CAN BEAT THE MOLE MAN WITHOUT FIGHTING HIM!
"WE?" SINCE WHEN ARE YOU PART OF THIS?
ON TO THE BAXTER BUILDING!
PICK UP THAT GARBAGE, YOU SLOB!
THIS CITY WILL SOON ■E MINE--
--AND I WON'T TOLERATE LITTERING~!

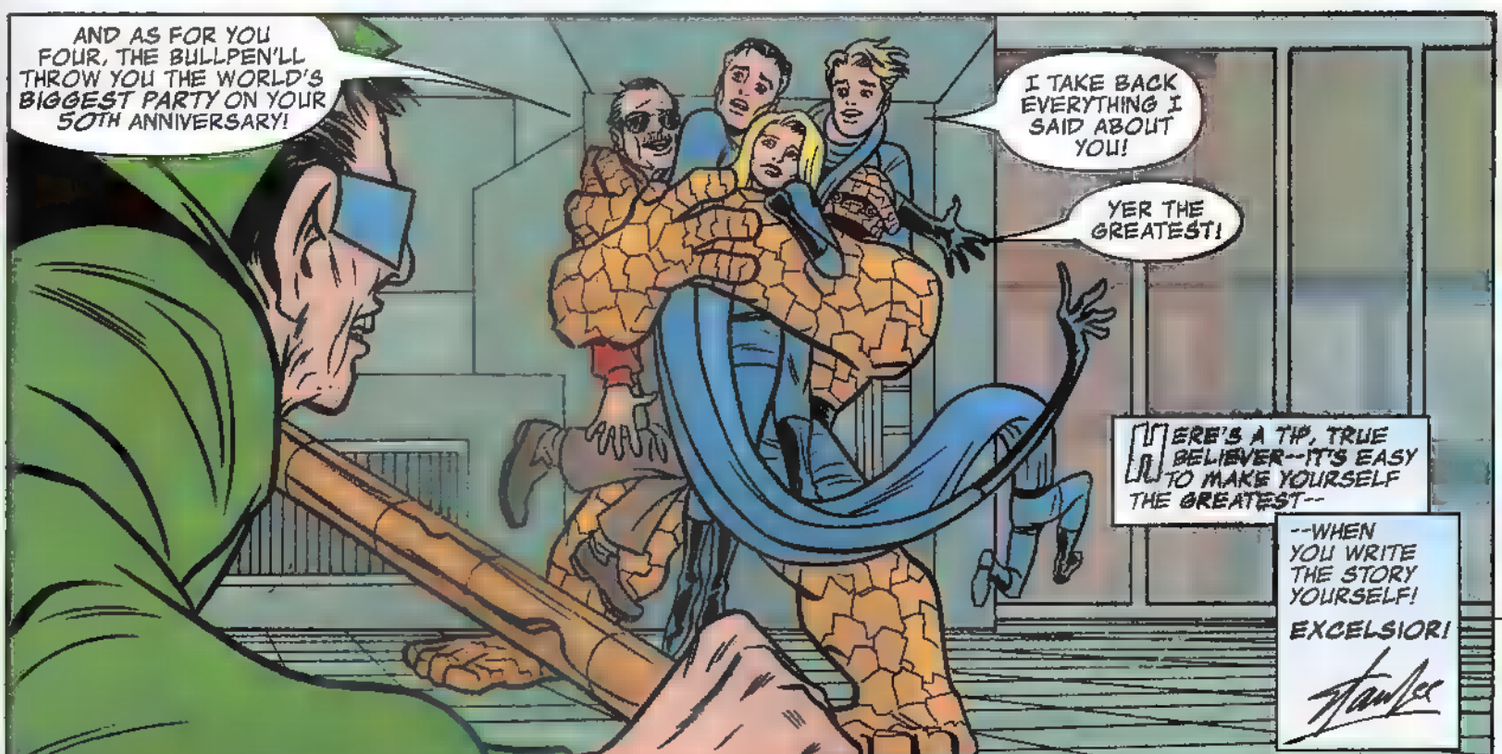

I'M JUST GONNA TALK TO THE MOLE MAN.
WHAT'S YOUR PLAN-- TO BORE HIM TO DEATH?
LET 'IM GO. IT'S ONE WAY TO GIT RID'A HIM!
GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES. IF I'M NOT BACK BY THEN--
WE'LL CELEBRATE!
I GUESS FIVE MINUTES WON'T MATTER.
IT'S NOT AS BAD AS-- 45 YEARS!
AW, HONEY, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OFF THAT KICK.
SONUVAGUN! LEE'S RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHTIN'--
HEADIN' TOWARDS THE MOLE MAN!
EVEN HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO DIE LIKE THAT!
RIGHT. THERE ARE PEOPLE MORE ANNOYING THAN STAN.
YEAH? LIKE WHO?
HMMMM.
OKAY, MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL HE WENT.

CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER! LET'S GET THE MOLE MAN!
YAHOO! NOW YOU'RE TALKIN'!
LEMME AT 'IM!
OH, REED, YOU'RE MY MISTER FANTASTIC AGAIN!

HOLD IT!
STAY WHERE YOU ARE!

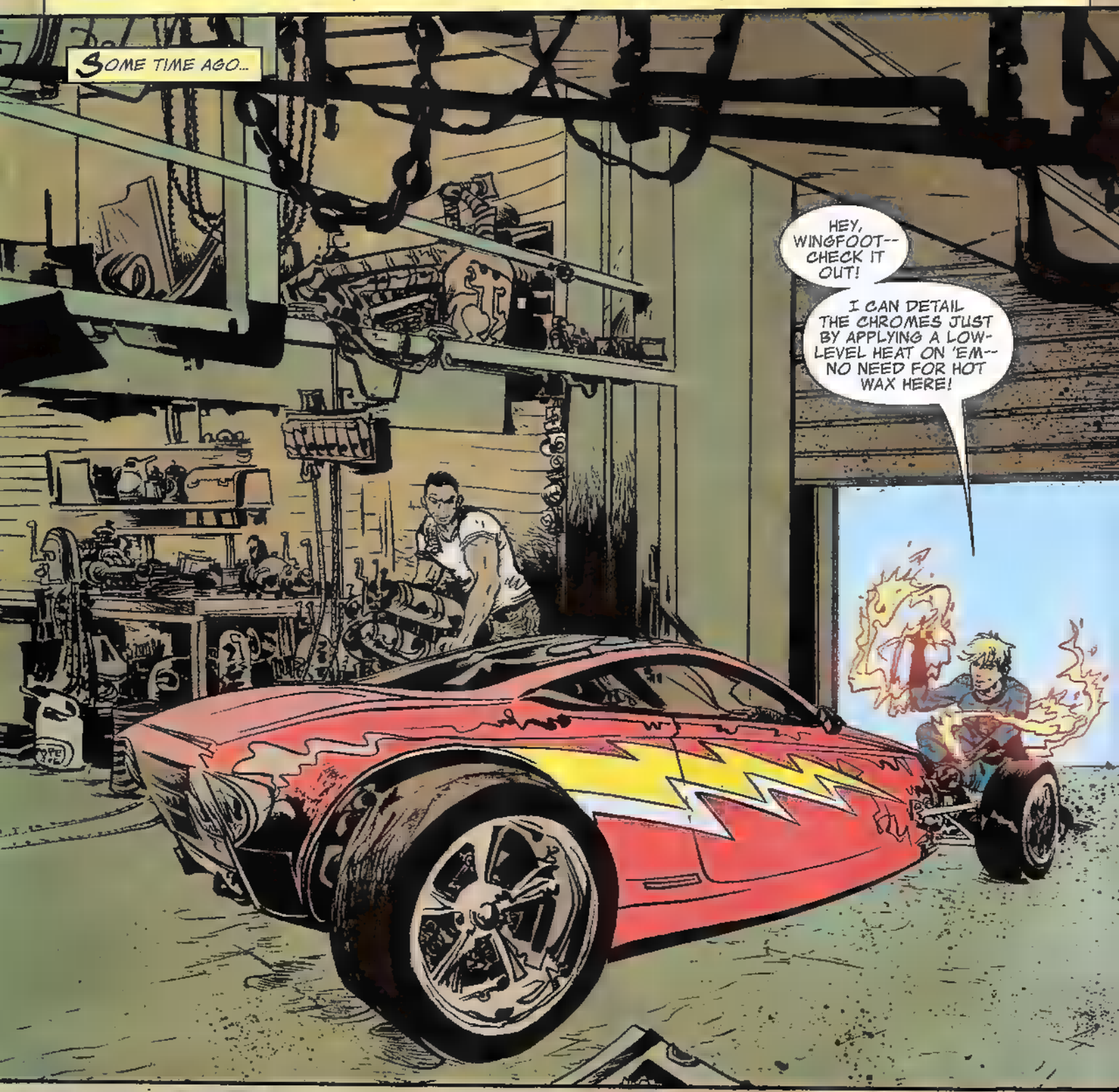
STAN, YOU'VE TEAMED UP WITH THE ENEMY?!!
NO! THE FIGHT'S OVER! THE MOLE MAN WANTS PEACE!
HOW? HOW DID YOU DO IT?

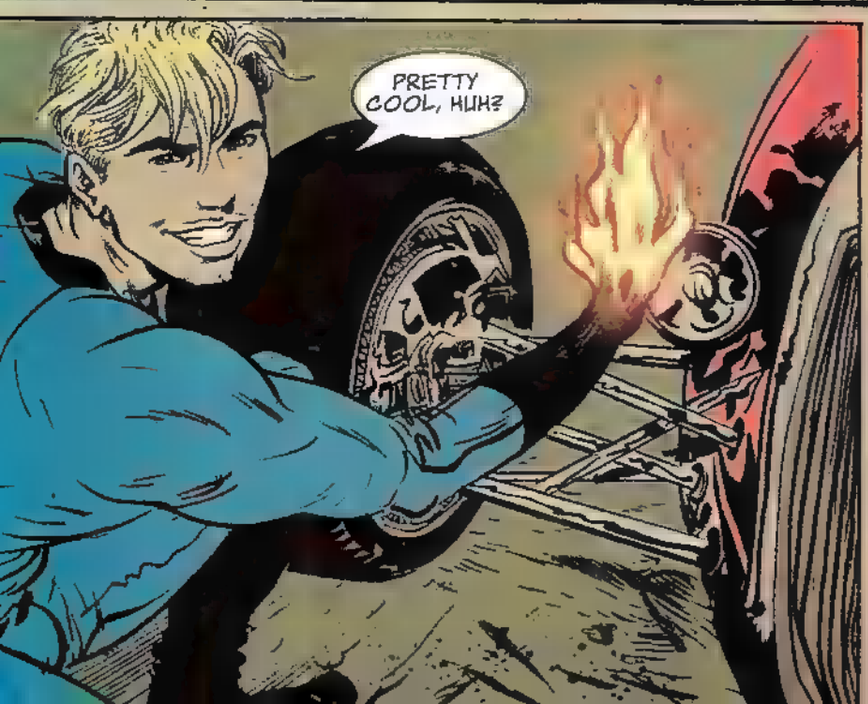
EASY! I MADE HIM AN OFFER HE COULDN'T REFUSE!
IN THE NEXT MARVEL MOVIE--
HE PROMISED ME A CAMEO!


AND AS FOR YOU FOUR, THE BULLPEN'LL THROW YOU THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PARTY ON YOUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY!
I TAKE BACK EVERYTHING I SAID ABOUT YOU!
YER THE GREATEST!
HERE'S A TIP, TRUE BELIEVER--IT'S EASY TO MAKE YOURSELF THE GREATEST--
--WHEN YOU WRITE THE STORY YOURSELF!
EXCELSIOR!
Stan Lee

A DAY AT THE RACES

STORY & ART BY - PAUL POPE | COLOR ART BY - JOSE VILLARRUBIA | LETTERING BY - VC'S RUS WOOTON


SOME TIME AGO...
HEY, WINGFOOT--CHECK IT OUT!
I CAN DETAIL THE CHROMES JUST BY APPLYING A LOW-LEVEL HEAT ON 'EM--NO NEED FOR HOT WAX HERE!



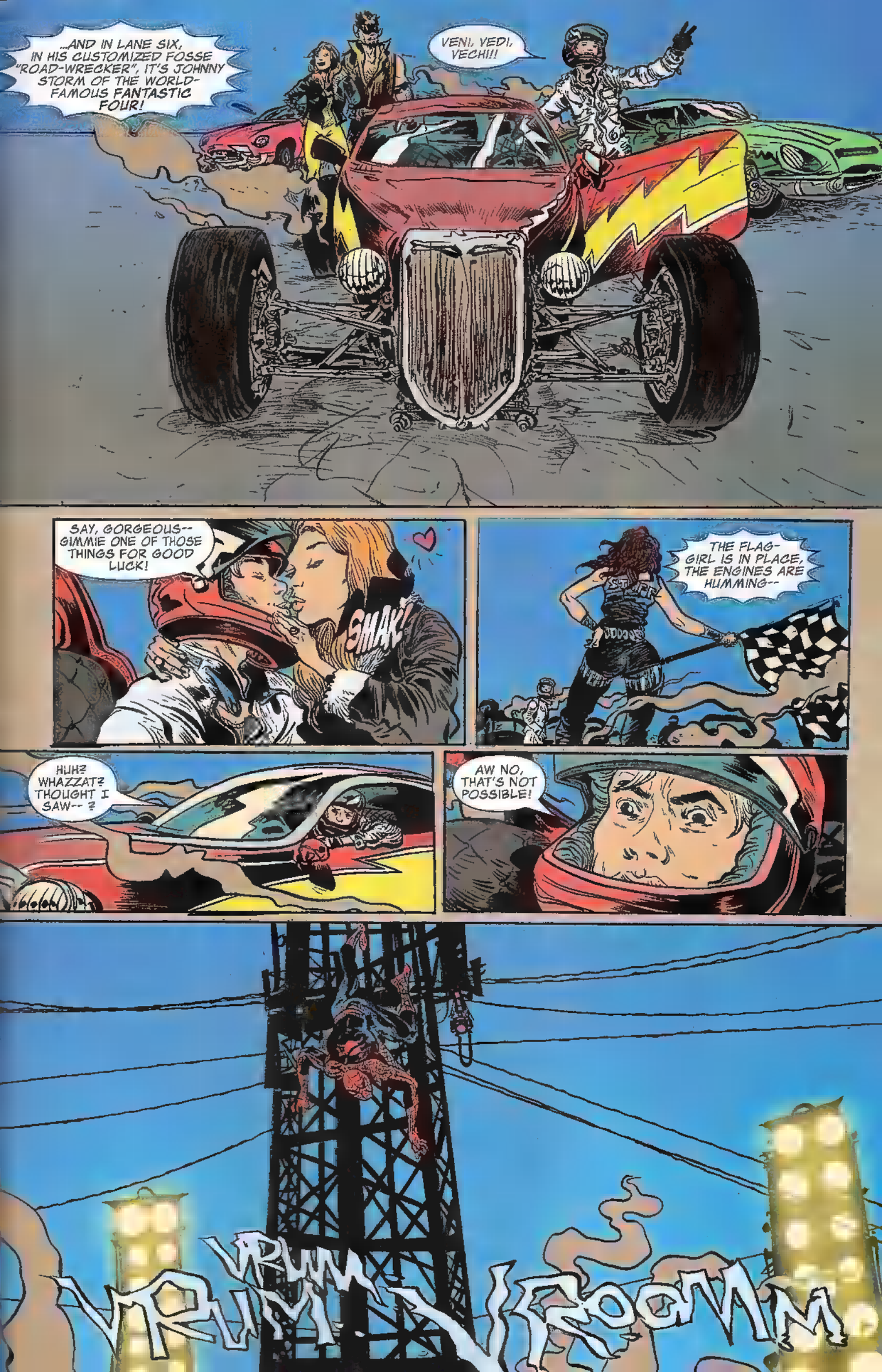
I DON'T KNOW IF I'D CALL IT "COOL" EXACTLY.
FOR A GUY WITH A PENCHANT FOR BURSTING INTO FLAME EVERY FIVE MINUTES, I'D SAY IT'S A PRETTY UNDERSTATED DEMONSTRATION OF YOUR ABILITIES...

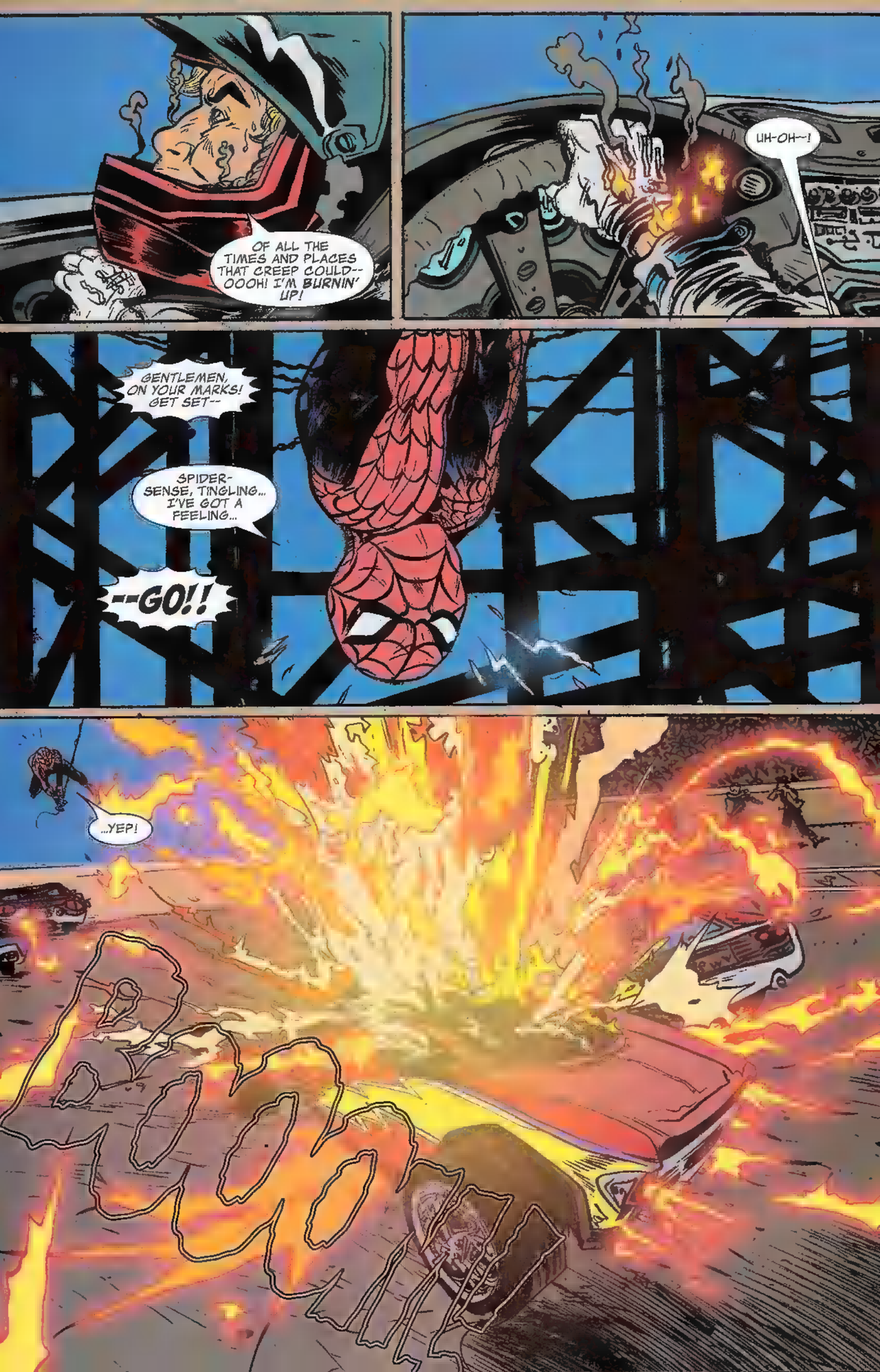
OF COURSE, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT KIND OF PYROTECHNICS YOU'D BE CAPABLE OF IF YOU HAD A PROPER AUDIENCE IN HERE WITH YOU.
PROPER--
WAIT A [illegible] ARE YOU CALLIN' ME A HAM?!
YOU? YOU'RE HAMMIER THAN A B-MOVIE ACTOR DOING SHAKESPEARE, SON.
LET'S SEE IF THE GAME'S ON YET.
NEWS GUY
WELL, WELL, WELL, LOOK WHO'S IN THE NEWS AGAIN, JOHN! YOUR FAVORITE SUPER HERO!
AW, C'MON, SPIDER-MAN?! YOU THINK I'M A HAM?! EVERYTHING THAT GUY DOES IS A PUBLICITY STUNT!
ME? I RESCUE ALIEN PRINCESSES, BEAT UP SUPER-SKRULLS AND DOCTOR DOOMS. AND WHO GETS ALL THE CREDIT? JOHNNY STORM?
NO--THE FANTASTIC FOUR, THAT'S WHO!
WHY, STORM-- IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY YOU WERE JEALOUS.
OF SPIDER-MAN?! I CAN'T STAND THAT GUY...!
BLING!
HANG ON, MY PHONE-- SOMEBODY'S TEXTING ME.
Hey kid! Near a TV? Yr fave super hero on channel one!
HAH! THAT OUGHTA GET HIS GOAT!

SAY, BEN, HAVE YOU SEEN THE UNIVERSAL FOGLET ADAPTOR AROUND HERE? I SEEM TO HAVE MISPLACED IT.
HUH? HEY, STRETCHO--THANKS AGAIN FOR WHIPPIN' UP THESE LITTLE THUMB DOO-HICKEYS FOR ME. HOW ELSE COULD I USE MY NEW BLACKBERRY? IT'S GREAT!
YES, I'VE INSTRUCTED THE F.F. LICENSING DEPARTMENT TO LOOK INTO MARKETING IT AS A PROSTHETIC PROTOTYPE FOR THE MEDICAL FIELD.
ALTHOUGH YOU'VE BEEN TEXTING SO MUCH, I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR CARPAL TUNNEL NEXT.
IS THAT [illegible] FEATURE ON [illegible]? WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T TELL JOHNNY--YOU KNOW HOW HE IS...
TOO LATE!
Buzz off, [illegible] big orange ape--do I bug you every time the HULK is on TV?
MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN AT THE DAILY BUGLE:
MORE SPIDER-MAN, PARKER!? HOW MANY ATTACK PIECES DO YOU THINK I WANT TO RUN IN A WEEK!?
BUT MISTER JAMESON--

WHAT IS IT WITH YOU AND SPIDER-MAN ANYHOW, PARKER?! I'M STARTING TO THINK YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT OF HIS FAN CLUB!
NO, I-- BUT, MISTER JAMESON--SPIDER-MAN'S NEWSWORTHY--PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW--
CAN'T YOU BRING ME SOMETHING WITH SOME COMMERCIAL APPEAL?! WE'RE TRYING TO SELL PAPERS HERE!
GO GET ME SOME SHOTS OF THAT BIG-HAIR-FAMOUS-SUPER-RICH-KID, JOHNNY STORM! HE'S RACIN' IN THE BIG FORMULA RUN THIS WEEKEND--WITH ANY LUCK, HE'LL "FLAME ON"!
GO! BRING ME SOME FLASHY PICS OF JOHNNY STORM KISSING A HOT BALLERINA OR SOME CUTE LITTLE STARLET OR SOMETHING! GO!
OKAY, OKAY!
...AND MORE SPIDER-MAN!
SURE, DUMP ON PETER, WHY NOT? EVERYBODY ELSE DOES!
GLAMOUR SHOTS OF JOHNNY STORM--
CELEBRITY GIRLFRIENDS, RACE CARS AND HAIR GEL-- HIS NAME ALL OVER EVERYTHING!
JUST ONCE, I'D LIKE TO SEE THAT GUY KNOCKED DOWN A PEG OR TWO! JUST ONCE!
AT THE RACETRACK, THAT WEEKEND:
WHAT'S ALL THE HUBBUB OVER THERE?
THREE GUESSES WHO JUST ARRIVED...
JOHNNY!
OH-- IT'S JOHNNY STORM!

JOHNNY! OH, JOHNNY!
FLAME ON FOR US!
THEY LOVE YA, JOHN.
GOOD GRIEF!
OH, IT'S REALLY HIM--OH, JOHNNY!
SORRY, GIRLS!
I'M HERE TO RACE--NOT SHOW OFF!
JOHNNY! OVER HERE--!
OOF!
CROWD'S TOO THICK--CAN'T GET IN FOR A GOOD SHOT--
...SURE, WHY NOT?
...THAT'S "ERIKA", WITH A "K".
SAY...THAT RADIO TOWER GIVES ME AN IDEA! IF OL' PETER PARKER CAN'T GET STORM'S ATTENTION--
--I BET I KNOW WHO CAN...!
ISNT IT ABOUT TIME YOU GOT BEHIND THE WHEEL, VALENTINO?
RIGHT, RIGHT!


...AND IN LANE SIX, IN HIS CUSTOMIZED FOSSE "ROAD-WRECKER", IT'S JOHNNY STORM OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS FANTASTIC FOUR!
VENI, VEDI, VECHI!!!
SAY, GORGEOUS-- GIMMIE ONE OF THOSE THINGS FOR GOOD LUCK!
SHAK!
THE FLAG-GIRL IS IN PLACE, THE ENGINES ARE HUMMING--
HUH? WHAZZAT? THOUGHT I SAW-- ?
AW NO, THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
VRUM
VROOM

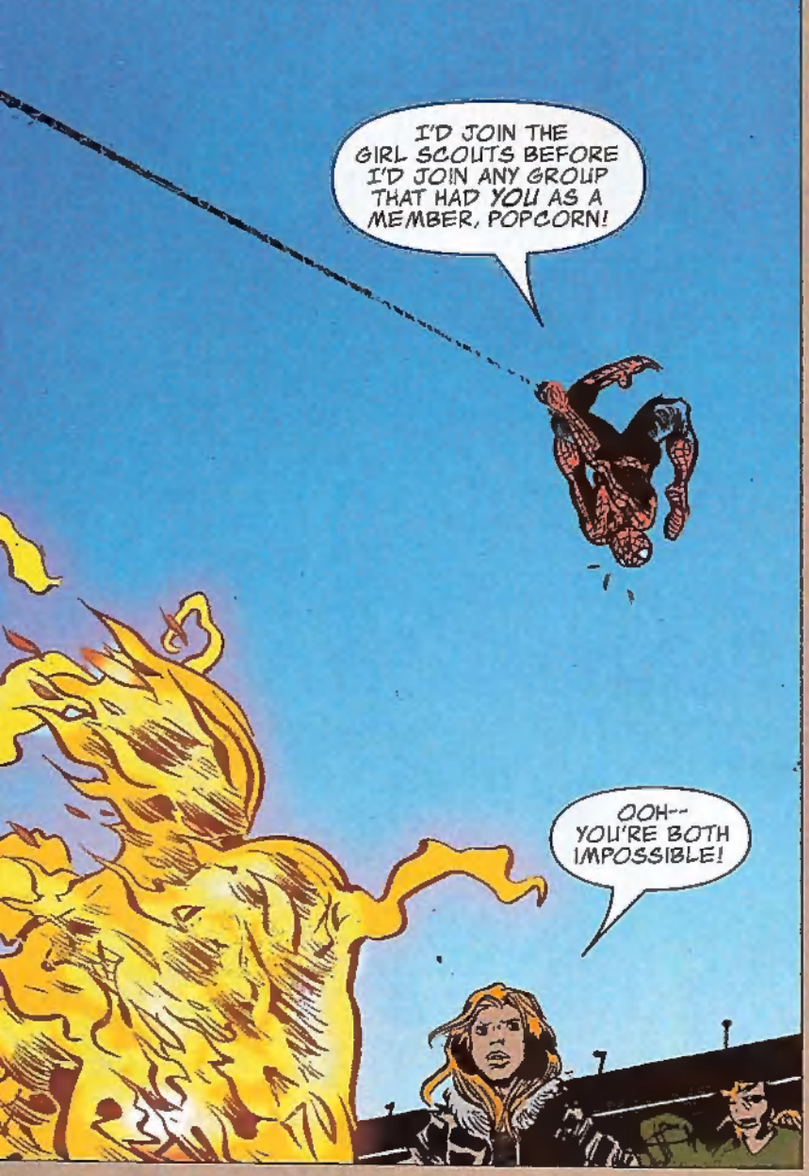

OF ALL THE TIMES AND PLACES THAT CREEP COULD-- OOOH! I'M BURNIN' UP!
UH-OH--!
GENTLEMEN, ON YOUR MARKS! GET SET--
SPIDER-SENSE, TINGLING... I'VE GOT A FEELING...
--GO!!
...YEP!
BOOM

...AND I LIKED THAT CAR, TOO!
HEY, IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOU'RE A HOTHEAD WITH A BAD TEMPER, TORCH!
WHEN I GET BACK HERE I'M GONNA BURN THAT MASK RIGHT OFF YOUR FACE!
BUT FIRST, THE CAR FIRE!
I'LL JUST REVERSE GEARS AND ABSORB ALL THE FLAMES BACK INTO ME!
TASTES A BIT LIKE GASOLINE, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN SETTING THE SPEEDWAY ABLAZE!

WELL, J. JONAH! YOU WANTED SOME ACTION SHOTS OF THE TORCH, I THINK YOU'RE GONNA GET SOME!
WHOO-HOO! BETTER THAN A DOUBLE ESPRESSO WITH A RED BULL CHASER! I'M AWAKE NOW!
ALL RIGHT, YOU MASKED MEATBALL-- HOPE YOU BROUGHT YOUR SUNTAN OIL!
WHOOP!! I'VE HEARD OF "OUT OF THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE", BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
...I REMEMBERED THE LENS CAP THIS TIME, DIDN'T I?
CLICK!

THERE'S GOTTA BE AN EASIER WAY TO MAKE A LIVING THAN THIS!
THAT LAST ONE SINGED MY NOSE HAIRS!
HE'S NOT FOOLIN' AROUND! BETTER GET IN CLOSE TO THE CROWD, WHERE HE CAN'T USE HIS FIREPOWER...
FLAPP!
SPIDER-MAN!
OH, THIS IS RICH! FIRST MY CAR, NOW MY GIRL--?!
THIS CLOWN'S TOO MUCH!
FLAMING FIREBALLS?! C'MON, TORCH--THIS GAG WAS OLD THE LAST THREE HUNDRED TIMES YOU TRIED IT--!

YEAH, BUT WHAT IF THIS TIME THE GAG'S A DIVERSION?! FOOT MEET FACE!
WHAM!
OOF!
JOHNNY STORM, YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A BIG BABOON!
AND YOU, SPIDER-MAN! REALLY!
YOU'RE FIGHTING EACH OTHER LIKE A COUPLE OF KNOW-NOTHING DELINQUENT HOODLUMS! SHAME ON YOU--! YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THE GOOD GUYS!
HEY, BUTANE-BREATH, EVER NOTICE OUR FIGHTS ALWAYS END WITH SOME SENSIBLE BLONDE TELLIN' US TO COOL IT?
WHY DON'T WE JUST TAKE HER ADVICE AND CALL IT GAME-AND-MATCH?
HUFF-HUFF--YEAH, I CAN'T TAKE YOU, YOU CAN'T TAKE ME...
GUESS WE'RE STUCK WITH EACH OTHER, HUH?
GUESS SO--A TRUCE, THEN?
TRUCE-- PUT 'ER THERE, BUDDY.
PSYCHE!
AND YA STILL CAN'T JOIN THE F.F., YA GOON!


I'D JOIN THE GIRL SCOUTS BEFORE I'D JOIN ANY GROUP THAT HAD YOU AS A MEMBER, POPCORN!
OOH-- YOU'RE BOTH IMPOSSIBLE!

THE NEXT MORNING, AT THE BAXTER BUILDING, THE CELEBRATED HOME OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR:

SAY, GET THIS, BOYS--"SPIDER-MAN APPREHENDS MYSTERIO AFTER FOILED JEWEL HEIST", WELL, WHATAYA KNOW? A GOOD GUY DOIN' SOMETHIN' GOOD. HUH!
PFFT--!

PASS THE CREAM, WILL YOU, BEN?

...AND WHAT'S THIS, HERE? "HUMAN TORCH WRECKS PRICELESS SPORTS CAR IN TRACK MISHAP, DISRUPTS FORMULA RACE-- PICTURES ON PAGE SIX"?
WAY TA GO, HOTSHOT!
THE DAILY BU

BUZZ OFF, YA BIG PILE OF ROCKS...
TH' EVER-LOVIN' END.